In letter, pope responds to criticisms over Lefebvrite decision

BY JOHN THAVIS

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — In a letter to the world’s bishops, Pope Benedict XVI expressed regret that his lifting of the excommunications of four traditionalist bishops gave rise to a storm of protests and bitterness.

The pope said the controversy over Bishop Richard Williamson’s statements denying the extent of the Holocaust was “an unforeseen mishap” — one that could have been anticipated, however, by paying more attention to information easily available on the Internet.

The pope said he was particularly saddened at the reaction of some Catholics who seemed willing to believe he was changing direction on Catholic-Jewish relations and were ready to “attack me with open hostility.” He thanked “our Jewish friends” who helped clarify the matter and restore a sense of trust.

The Vatican published the 2,500-word letter in six languages March 12. The Vatican spokesman, Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, called it a “unique, exceptional document” for its direct and personal style, and said it showed the pope had listened carefully to what people were saying.

The pope said he was taking the unusual step of writing to the bishops because the episode had generated “a discussion more heated than any we have seen for a long time,” both inside and outside the church.

He said his overture to Bishop Williamson and the other three bishops of the Society of St. Pius X was designed to close a wound and bring unity to the church, by lifting excommunications incurred in 1988 and opening the way to dialogue with the society.

But when Bishop Williamson’s comments about the Holocaust were circulated, “it suddenly appeared as something completely different: as the repudiation of reconciliation between Christians and Jews, and thus as the reversal of what the (Second Vatican) Council had laid down in this regard to guide the church’s path,” he said.

As a result, he said, “an avalanche of protests was unleashed, whose bitterness laid bare wounds deeper than those of the present moment.”

“I was saddened by the fact that even Catholics, who, after all, might have had a better knowledge of the situation, thought they had to attack me with open hostility,” he said.

“Precisely for this reason I thank all the other our Jewish friends, who quickly helped to clear up the misunderstanding and to restore the atmosphere of friendship and trust,” he said.

The pope acknowledged something critics have pointed out: that a simple Internet search would have revealed Bishop Williamson’s views on the Holocaust and helped the Vatican anticipate the reaction.

“I have been told that consulting the information available on the Internet would have made it possible to perceive the problem early on. I have learned the lesson that in the future in the Holy See we will have to pay greater attention to that source of news,” he said.

Pope Benedict said he deeply regretted another mistake: that the lifting of the excommunications was not adequately explained and gave rise to misinterpretations.

CRITICISM, PAGE 3

Altar boys stand in the sanctuary during a Tridentine Mass at St. Michael the Archangel Chapel in Farmingville, N.Y., Feb. 1. The chapel is affiliated with the Society of St. Pius X.

CRITICISM, PAGE 3

For more about Seminarian John Thavis, who is completing his master’s in journalism at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, Va., visit www.churchnewstimes.com/staff/jthavis.html.

As a student at the University of Notre Dame, Thavis wrote the weekly “College Crossroads” column for the campus newspaper, the Notre Dame Observer.

He is expected to graduate in May from the University of Mary Washington, where he is majoring in communications and minoring in theology.

Thavis has written about the destruction of the St. Michael Archangel Chapel in North Andover, Mass., and the closing of the Catholic Church of the Annunciation in New York City. He also wrote about a recent move by the bishops of the Diocese of Rochester to increase diocesan oversight of parishes in an effort to prevent further scandal.

Thavis has written about events in the Catholic Church in both the United States and around the world.

His home in the Archdiocese of Washington is in Alexandria, Va.

Reflecting on the Pope’s response to the controversy.

CRITICISM, PAGE 3

1. Pope’s letter is a unique, exceptional document.
2. Pope has listened carefully to what people are saying.
3. Pope takes unusual step of writing to bishops.
4. Pope’s letter is direct and personal.
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Pope’s letter is from a pastor whose heart is pure

A letter to be read in prayer

On Thursday, the bishops of the Catholic Church received a historic and moving letter about Pope Benedict XVI. I have asked our editor to publish it in its entirety in this newspaper. It is a letter from a pastor whose heart is pure.

The pope expresses his sorrow about recent events and it is evident that the reaction of many in the church was painful to him. It is a frank letter in which the pope explains to his brothers in the church what he means by his reasons for lifting the excommunication of those validly, but illicitly ordained as bishops. It is a gesture of reconciliation, which is part of his vocation as Successor of Peter. I, too, lifted this excommunication as a response to the request of those who have been separated from the church since the Second Vatican Council.

He admits that the Holy See should have known about the unfortunate statements of Bishop Williamson, and indicates the need to use the Internet as a source of news. He gives thanks to the Jewish people who understood and came to see the pope and accepted his clarification and his love for them.

He makes clear that the relationship with the Jewish people is treasured in the Catholic Church, and this improved relationship between our two historic communities established so definitively by Pope John Paul II, continues in the pontificate of Pope Benedict XVI. He responds to those who felt that there were more important things in the church at this time. He does not deny this, but he shows how important this gesture was for the See of Peter, and he thanks those who have responded to him with love and appreciation. He explains the difference between doctrine and discipline, but wonders why some found it necessary to attack him and did not see his gesture as part of his ministry of charity. I always try to understand people’s explanations of their actions, as is my most serious obligation, because I have promised always to keep communion with the See of Peter, and to obey the pope. That is one of the seven solemn promises a bishop takes on the day of his episcopal ordination.

But this letter moved me deeply. It is the letter of a man whose life is holy, who wishes to live his vocation, and is not afraid to call to accountability those who do not understand how central to the work of the Successor of Peter was this gesture of communion. I urge you to read the letter and pray over it. There is teaching there, especially for bishops, but for all of us.

A church for all and a special Sunday

A call came from Father Chau Pham, SVD, pastor of St. Patrick’s, Fort Wayne, indicating that I had been there for the Vietnamese, and also for the Hispanics, but I should come for the Irish on the Sunday before St. Patrick’s Day. How can I say “no” to that?

A full church and the recognition of a large confirmation class

It is absolutely splendid to see the revival and strengthening of St. Patrick Parish. Karl Rahner, the distinguished theologian, mentioned that one of the great experiences of the Second Vatican Council, was the Welt-Kirche, the sense that we now at last had a “world church,” a church for the whole globe. Pope Benedict is evident at St. Patrick’s, and it was a joy to spend time afterwards with the parishioners, and also to visit the beginnings of a health clinic. The liturgy, of course, was for the third Sunday of Lent, but with a mention of St. Patrick. Songs and readings were in Vietnamese, Spanish and English.

And more immigrants

Off then, to our Archbishop Noll Catholic Center, where two priests from Kansas, but originally from Burma, were here to give pastoral care to our Burmese.

Since October, they were to bring together the Burmese Catholics. Fort Wayne is now the largest center for Burmese outreach of that country — over 5,000. We have been attempting to give pastoral care to the Catholics, and we were able to draw two native-born priests to hear confessions, have Mass for them, and preach and meet with them. Most are now members of the cathedral parish. It was certainly a joy to have lunch with them. The two priests and another gentleman from Pennsylvania who watches out for the Burmese Catholics spoke to them. And I was able to have a question-and-answer period through these translators.

The special moment

These are refugees. They are here legally. But many in the present economic climate cannot find jobs. We have been able to get some into Catholic schools, and most of all, give them a presence. How wonderful it was for them to have Mass in their own language.

A peak moment

After the priests and I had given our blessing, I asked if there was a hymn they could sing. They all stood, young and old; and remember, there were many teenagers and children among them. They sang a hymn to Our Lady. There were tears in their eyes. Their patroness is Our Lady Help of Christians. There is something about Mary, which is unique to the Catholic faith. She is the mother of us all, given to us by Christ from the altar of the Cross. In every land, she is venerated in the Catholic Church. In each culture, she finds her own place.

To see these people from so far away, many of them afraid and anxious. Their language is so different to our ears, and our language so different to theirs. Yet, we are one in faith and eschaton — and in our veneration of Our Lady.

Fort Wayne is a good city. Arms have been opened to them. The mayor has set aside a special Sunday, to see they can get food stamps and help; and the Catholic Church, as always, is doing its part, as indeed we must.

Our inspiration is taken from the Holy See. We are trying to help those who have been separated from the church, especially for bishops, but for all of us.

Parish missions

I have six parish missions during Lent, and four have been completed. A wonderful night for a penance service at St. Michael’s, Plymouth, and then the long drive home through the pouring rain. A joy to be with Father Bill Kummer and Father Eloy Jimenez.

A closing of a parish mission in Sacred Heart, Warsaw

They are still worshiping in the parish hall, but in a few weeks they will be in their renovated, expanded church. A great joy to be with my good friend of many years, Msgr. Jim Wolf. Missions still ahead at St. Joseph, Roanoke; St. Elizabeth Ann Seton; and St. Mary’s, Avilla. Every one a privilege.

The ministry of education

I will have pastoral visits this week to two of our four Catholic high schools. I have been pleased to lead efforts at three of our high schools to raise funds for tuition. We are anxious about what will happen in this present economic downturn in our four Catholic high schools and our grade schools. In downturns in the past, most less serious than this, we have lost students and we must prevent that by giving tuition grants so that small check to your favorite Catholic school to help those who need assistance to pay their tuition?

I am looking forward to St. Patrick’s Day; and Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception; and a few words for St. Patrick; and thoughts about my mother and father. My dad arrived in New York on St. Patrick’s Day in 1925. He was 26 years old. No money. Homesick for his dear parents and home. A desire to work hard. A strong sense of Irish history, but a conviction that he was in the land of hope and opportunity. I thought of him and my mother when I saw there they can get a brighter future of the Burmese this past weekend.

See you all next week.
CATHOLIC

CRITICISM

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

about the traditionalist society’s status in the church.

He emphasized that the removal of the excommunications was a disciplinary measure that affects individuals. But the fact that the Society of St. Pius X has no standing in the church depends on doctrinal reasons, he said.

“Until the doctrinal questions are clarified, the society has no canonical status in the church, and its ministers — even though they have been freed of the ecclesiastical penalty — do not legitimately exercise any ministry in the church,” he said.

In view of the importance of the doctrinal issues still to be clarified with the society, the pope announced that he was putting the Pontifical Commission “Ecclesia Dei,” which has handled reconciliation efforts with traditionalist groups, under the auspices of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

This will make it clear that the problem now to be addressed are essentially doctrinal in nature and concern primarily the acceptance of the Second Vatican Council and the post-conciliar magisterium of the popes,” he said.

He underlined what Vatican officials have said in recent weeks, that for the Society of St. Pius X full communion implies acceptance of Vatican II.

“The church’s teaching authority cannot be frozen in the year 1962 — this must be quite clear to the society,” the pope said.

At the same time, he said, some defenders of Vatican II need to be reminded that being faithful to the council also means being faithful to the church’s entire doctrinal history, without cutting “the roots from which the tree draws its life.”

After making his clarifications, the pope confronted the question: “Was this measure needed? Was it necessary?” He answered with a heartfelt defense of his reconciliatory intentions, saying the church cannot stop working for unity among its ranks.

“That the quiet gesture of extending a hand gave rise to a huge uproar, and thus became a focal point and a source of news. I was saddened by the fact that even Catholics who, after all, might have had a better knowledge of the situation, thought the pope was speaking only for himself. Precisely because of this reason I thank all the more our Jewish friends, who quickly helped to clear up the misunderstanding and to restore the atmosphere of friendship and trust which — as in the days of Pope John Paul II — has also existed throughout the pontificate and, thank God, continues today.

Another mistake, which I deeply regret, is the fact that the extent and limits of the provision of 21 January 2009 were not clearly and adequately explained at the moment of its publication. The excommunication affects individuals, not institutions. An episcopal ordination lacking a pontifical mandate raises the danger of a schism, since it jeopardizes the unity of the College of Bishops with the pope. Consequently the church must react by employing her most severe punishment — excommunication — with the aim of calling those thus punished to repent and to return to unity. Twenty years after the ordinations, this goal has sadly not yet been attained. The remission of the excommunication has the same aim as that of the punishment: namely, to invite the four bishops once more to return to communion with the church. Precisely for this reason I thank all the more our Jewish friends, who quickly helped to clear up the misunderstanding and to restore the atmosphere of friendship and trust which — as in the days of Pope John Paul II — has also existed throughout the pontificate and, thank God, continues today.

The remission of the excommunication was a measure taken in the face of ecclesiastical discipline: the individuals were freed from the burden of conscience constituted by the most serious of ecclesiastical penalties. This disciplinary level needs to be distinguished from the doctrinal level. The fact that the Society of St. Pius X has not a canonical status in the church, is not, in the end, based on disciplinary but on doctrinal reasons. As long as the society does not have a canonical status in the church, its ministers do not exercise legitimate ministries in the church. There needs to be a distinction, then, between the disciplinary level, which deals with individuals as such, and the doctrinal level, at which ministry and institution are involved. In order to make this clear once again: until the doctrinal questions are clarified, the society has no canonical status in the church, and its ministers do not have the status of the excommunicated, and thus do not exercise any ministry in the church.

In light of this situation, it is my intention henceforth to join the
VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI declared a year of the priest in an effort to encourage “spiritual perfection” in priests.

The pope will open the special year with a vespers service at the Vatican June 19 — the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the day for the sanctification of priests. He will close the celebrations during a World Meeting of Priests in St. Peter’s Square June 19, 2010.

The pope made the announcement during an audience March 16 with members of the Vatican Congregation for Clergy.

He met with some 70 participants of the congregation’s March 16-18 plenary assembly, which focused on the missionary identity of the priest and his mission to sanctify, teach and govern.

During this jubilee year, the pope will also proclaim St. John Vianney to be patron saint of all priests.

The pope said he was calling for “true example of a priest at the service of the flock of Christ,” the pope said.

St. John Vianney is widely known to Catholics as the Cure (parish priest) of Ars who won over the hearts of his villagers in France by visiting with them, teaching them about God and reconciling people to the Lord in the confessional.

In his address, Pope Benedict said the priestly ministry consists of total adherence to the ecclesial tradition of participating “in a spiritually intense new life and a new lifestyle which was inaugurated by the Lord Jesus and which the apostles made their own.”

Priestly ordination creates new men who are bestowed with the gift and office of sanctifying, teaching and governing, he said.

The pope underlined the necessary and “indispensable struggle for moral perfection which must dwell in every authentically priestly heart.”

The pope said he was calling for the special year for priests in an effort to foster the priest’s yearning “for spiritual perfection, upon which the effectiveness of their ministry principally depends.”

“The awareness of the radical social changes over the past decades must stir the best ecclesial energies to look after the formation of priestly candidates,” the pope said.

This means great care must be taken to ensure permanent and consistent doctrinal and spiritual formation for seminarians and priests, he said, specifying the importance of passing down, especially to younger generations, “a correct reading of the texts of the Second Vatican Council, interpreted in the light of all the church’s doctrinal heritage.”

Priests must also be “present, identifiable and recognizable — for their judgment of faith, their personal virtues and their attitude — in the fields of culture and charity which have always been at the heart of the church’s mission,” he said.

“The centrality of Christ leads to a correct valuation of ordained ministry,” he said, adding that, without priestly ministry, there would be no Eucharist, no mission and even no church.

Therefore, he said, it is crucial to make sure that new bodies or pastoral organizations are not set up “for a time in which one might have to ‘dispense with’ ordained ministry based on an erroneous interpretation of the rightful promotion of the laity.”

“This would lay the foundations for further diluting the priestly ministry, and any supposed ‘solutions’ would dramatically coincide with the real causes of the problems currently connected with the ministry,” he said.

A family looks at a portrait of Pope Benedict XVI, painted with Cameroon’s national colors, outside the Basilica of Mary Queen of the Apostles in Yaounde, Cameroon, March 15. The pope will lead a vespers service at the basilica March 18 on his first papal visit to Africa.

Playing into the visit will be the pope’s 2005 meeting with civil and religious leaders in Rome next October.

The pope was to visit Angola March 20-23, celebrating Masses, meeting with civil and religious leaders and meeting with young people in a soccer stadium.

It is his 11th foreign trip since his election as pope in 2005.

Trip to Africa will focus on hopes, challenges

BY JOHN THAVIS

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI said his trip to Africa would be a missionary journey highlighting the continent’s challenges, its enormous potential and its “profound religious soul.”

“The pope, speaking two days before his departure for Cameroon and Angola, said he was not bringing a political or social program to Africa, but simply the Gospel message of love that is “capable of transforming the world.”

“This is the grace that can also renew Africa, because it generates an irresistible power of peace and a deep and radical reconciliation,” the pope told pilgrims at his noon blessing March 15.

“With this visit, I intend to embrace the entire African continent: its thousands of differences and its profound religious soul; its ancient cultures and its difficult path of development and reconciliation; its serious problems, its painful wounds and its enormous potential and hopes,” he said.

The pope dedicated the trip to St. Joseph, whose feast is March 19, and entrusted to the saint the challenges and hopes of all segments of the African population.

“In particular, I am thinking of the victims of hunger, of disease, of injustice, of fratricidal conflicts and every form of violence that unfortunately continues to strike adults and children, as well as missionaries, priests, men and women religious, and volunteers,” he said.

The pope said that among the main purposes of his weeklong visit was to confirm the faith of Catholics and encourage all Christians in ecumenical cooperation. He said the trip, his first to the African continent, was inspired in part by the evangelizing efforts of St. Paul.

The pope was to spend March 17-20 in Cameroon, where he was scheduled to meet with African bishops and hand-deliver the working document for the Synod of Bishops for Africa, to be held in Rome next October.

The pope was to visit Angola March 20-23, celebrating Masses, meeting with civil and religious leaders and meeting with young people in a soccer stadium.

It is his 11th foreign trip since his election as pope in 2005.
Pontifical Commission “Ecclesia Dei” — the body which has been convened since 1988 by the Pope to grant permissions to married men and women the way to God. This body is present in this world and to show which no longer has fuel, the danger of dying out like a flame areas of the world the faith is in. 3:15). In our days, when in vast 13:1) — in Jesus Christ, crucified of freedom? That we must always learn anew the supreme priority, which is love? The day I spoke about this at the major seminary, the feast of Our Lady of Trust was being celebrated in Rome. And so it is: Mary teaches us trust. She leads us to her Son, and to the all of us can put our trust. He will be our guide —

even in turbulent times. And so I would like to offer heartfelt thanks to all the many bishops who have lately offered me touching tokens of trust and affection, and who assured me of their prayers. My thanks also go to all the faithful who in these days have given me testimony of their constant fidelity to the Successor of St. Peter. May the Lord protect all of us and guide our steps along the way of peace. This is the prayer that rises up instinctively from my heart at the beginning of this Lent, a liturgical season particularly suited to interior purification, one which invites all of us to look with renewed hope to the light which awaits us at Easter.

With a special Apostolic Blessing, I remain Yours in the Lord,

Benedictus PP. XVI
From the Vatican,
10 March 2009
Growing guilt means people are ready for confession, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — While more and more people seem to have trouble seeing some of their actions as sins, the fact that so many people feel guilty means they are open to hearing about the need for confession, Pope Benedict XVI said. In a message to priests participating in a special course for confessors, the pope said the formation and education of consciences is a pastoral priority for the church. Paragraphically, “to the degree that one loses a sense of sin, unfortunately there increases a sense of guilt,” the pope said in a message released March 14 at the Vatican. Catechism, homilies and other forms of preaching, spiritual direction and the celebration of the sacraments of the Eucharist and of penance all are important occasions for helping people recognize their sins and their need for forgiveness, the pope told the priests attending the course sponsored by the Apostolic Penitentiary, the Vatican tribunal dealing with confession and matters of conscience.

Cleveland Diocese to have 52 fewer parishes within 15 months

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Come June 30, 2010, there will be 52 fewer parishes in the Cleveland Diocese. Under a plan announced March 15 following a two-year planning process, Bishop Richard G. Lennon said 29 parishes will close and 41 others will merge to form 18 new parishes during the next 15 months. The realignment will leave the country’s 17th largest diocese with 172 parishes serving 753,000 Catholics across eight counties in northeastern Ohio. He cited the closure of the closings and mergers affect parishes in the diocese’s urban cores — Cleveland, Akron and Lorain — and in several inner-ring suburbs. Some mergers involve parishes within blocks of each other. Meeting with reporters, Bishop Lennon called the realignment “a very difficult but necessary step” to carry out the church’s mission in northeast Ohio. He cited the movement of Catholics from urban to suburban and rural areas of the diocese, the declining number of priests in the diocese and faltering parish finances as reasons for the realignment. He said population shifts have resulted in two-thirds of Catholics in the diocese being served by one-third of the parishes.

Church encouraged to use digital media, teach ethical communication

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — As the Catholic Church works to become more present in the new digital media, it also must help teach people to be ethical communicators, said Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Vatican secretary of state. Formation is crucial, he said, especially now that the world of communication is crossing new “frontiers that are in need of serious ethical grounding.” The cardinal’s remarks came March 13 at the end of a five-day meeting in Rome to discuss how the church should respond to the challenges and opportunities presented by modern media. The seminar was sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Social Communications and drew bishops from 82 countries. One aim of the gathering was to set the groundwork for a possible document by the council that would update its 1992 pastoral instruction, “Aetatis Novae” (“At the Dawn of a New Era”). In his talk, Cardinal Bertone said that the world has recently experienced enormous revolutions in communication technology that have “radically transformed, if not overturned,” the media and communications landscape. Any kind of new document or instruction “would be of little service without the constant contribution of educating pastoral workers — priests, religious, laypeople — who are personally involved in the field of media,” he said.

PRIEST ELEVATES EUCHARIST DURING MASS

Father Kevin Abels elevates the Eucharist during an Ash Wednesday Mass at Our Lady of Hope Church in Middle Village, N.Y., Feb. 25. Pope Benedict XVI called on Catholics to maintain an attitude of adoration during Mass as well as when praying before the Eucharist. “Our task is to perceive the very precious treasure of this ineffable mystery of faith both in the celebration of the Mass as well as during worship of the sacred species,” the pope told members of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments.

World’s societies said to devalue caregivers, those in need of care

UNITED NATIONS (CNS) — Caregiving is deeply embedded in the tenets of the world’s religions, but the world’s societies routinely devalue caregivers and the people who depend on them, said a panel of speakers March 11 in New York. The program, called “Caregiving Within the Family,” was the fourth discussion in a series called “The Human Dignity of Women in Contemporary Society,” sponsored by the Vatican’s U.N. mission, the Path to Peace Foundation, Franciscans International and the Vincentian Center for Church and Society at St. John’s University in Queens, N.Y. Earlier sessions explored women in migration, violence against women and economic injustice. “The Catholic Church played a fundamental role in paving the way for the emancipation and empowerment of women,” said Archbishop Celestino Migliore, apostolic nuncio to the United Nations. That inspired the sponsors to “invite experts to shed light on this steady, though at times bumpy, road to the rights and empowerment of women,” he said.

Vast majority of dioceses comply with sex abuse charter, audits find

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The latest audits assessing compliance with the U.S. Catholic bishops’ “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People” found nearly complete compliance among participating dioceses and eparchies, but the number refusing to participate rose from five to seven. A report released by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops March 13 showed that only four of the dioceses or eparchies participating in audits between July 1, 2007, and June 30, 2008, were found to be noncompliant with sex abuse protection policies. A report released by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops March 13 showed that only four of the dioceses or eparchies participating in audits between July 1, 2007, and June 30, 2008, were found to be noncompliant with sex abuse protection policies.

Papal preacher says intelligent design is truth of faith, not science

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Affirming the reality of an intelligent design for the creation and development of the universe is not a scientific theory, but a statement of faith, said the preacher of the papal household, Father Raniero Cantalamessa, offering a Lenten meditation to Pope Benedict XVI and top Vatican officials March 13, said the controversy that has arisen between scientists supporting evolution and religious believers promoting creationism or intelligent design is due mainly to a confusion between scientific theory and the truths of faith. The intelligent-design theory asserts that the development and evolution of life is such a hugely complex process that a supreme being, God, must be responsible for it. While some proponents of intelligent design claim that it is a scientifically valid theory, most scientists dismiss it as pseudoscience. The arguments, Father Cantalamessa said, are due to the fact that, “in my opinion, there is not a clear enough distinction between intelligent design as a scientific theory and intelligent design as a truth of faith.”

Catholics rally against effort to legislate parish financial control

HARTFORD, Conn. (CNS) — About 5,000 people gathered outside Connecticut’s state Capitol in Hartford March 11 to protest a bill — that would have given laypeople financial control of their parishes. The state’s three Catholic bishops were among the protesters, many of whom wore “Religious Freedom” stickers while they voiced opposition to the shelved bill and any future legislation of its kind. The Connecticut Catholic Conference had called on Catholics in the state to attend the rally as a way to “show support for the Roman Catholic Church and religious freedom in our state.” The legislation, introduced March 5, was prompted by a group of Catholics concerned about the management of parish funds following the embezzlement conviction of a Connecticut priest. At the request of its proponents, the bill was withdrawn and is dead for this legislative session. Carl Anderson, spokesman for the Archdiocese of Hartford, told rally participants that the bill’s intent to give authority over church finances to elected lay boards would send a “dangerous message to all religious leaders that will chill freedom of religion and free speech.”
Dismas House offers benefit dinner and silent auction

SOUTH BEND — Dismas House will offer its 23rd Annual Benefit Dinner at St. Hedwig Memorial Hall, 331 Scott St., on Thursday, April 2. The cost is $25 per person, with a portion of the cost tax-deductible. Tickets will be sold in advance through the Dismas House.

Dismas House works with men and women recently released from prison or jail to integrate them with community volunteers, college students and staff. College students and former offenders live together at Dismas House fostering a positive, family environment. Since its opening Dismas House has been home to over 500 former offenders, and its program has successfully restored over 75 percent of its residents to the community and their families.

Leaders in the field of prisoner reconciliation will be honored. Father David T. Link will receive the Father Jack Hickey Award. Father Link is the deputy director for Religious and Community Activities of the Indiana Department of Correction, a current teacher and chaplain in the PLUS restart program at Indiana State Prison and the Joseph A. Matson Dean and Professor Emeritus of the University of Notre Dame Law School.

David Keck of Granger will receive the T. Brooks Brademas Life Time Achievement Award for his 22 years of continuous service to Dismas House. He is the former owner of Keck’s Coffee and Bridge of Hope. Currently, Keck’s Coffee and ON Line Data, and is a member of St. Pius Catholic Church and the Roseland Rotary.

Joyce Rudolph, a Dismas House graduate, will be the keynote speaker and share how her Dismas journey saved her life and marriage.

Additionally, artwork, gift certificates, memorabilia and other specialty items will be available for purchase at the event’s silent auction. Dismas is accepting sponsorships and silent auction donations for the event. Proceeds from the dinner and silent auction will assist with the Dismas House program. To purchase tickets or for more information, contact Maria Kaczmarek at the Dismas House office by calling (574) 233-8522 or e-mail dismassouthbend@sbcglobal.net.

Bridge of Hope-St. Joseph County to sponsor “A Night with Paul A. Wright M.D.”

GRANGER — The St. Joseph Chapter of Bridge of Hope will offer “A Night with Paul A. Wright M.D.” at St. Pius X Parish in Granger on March 27 at 6:30 p.m.

Wright, noted author and Mother Teresa’s personal cardiologist, will speak on his time with Mother Teresa and her prescription for finding happiness and peace in service. The event begins with a light supper followed by Wright’s presentation and keynote speakers until 8 p.m. The presentation will be followed by a question-and-answer session and book signing.

A Night with Paul A. Wright, M.D. will help to provide the Christian Community of Michiana with an opportunity to truly inspire by Christian service and find opportunity to apply this inspiration to the service of the needy women and children of St. Joseph County.

A native of Steubenville, Ohio, and alumnus of University of Notre Dame, Wright founded the Poorest of the Poor, a program that provides food, clothing and supplies to the needy of the U.S. and internationally. He also founded the Medical Mission Program, which supplies the needy of Northeastern Ohio with free prescription drugs.

Since 1989, Bridge of Hope has been successfully assisting homeless mothers and their children to secure permanent housing and attain financial self-sufficiency. In a proven program, 80-85 percent of the single mothers in Bridge of Hope graduate with permanent housing, a circle of supportive mentors and a long-term plan for financial self-sufficiency through employment.

Each homeless family is paired with a church-based mentoring group that provides ongoing social, emotional and spiritual support. While working with Bridge of Hope staff, women learn the life skills necessary to set and achieve short and long term goals, responsible financial planning, parenting skills and education for future security.

To reserve a seat or for more information, call (574) 679-4238 or (574) 247-0650 or e-mail vbrlceofhpoesic.com.

Saint Mary’s hosts economic forum

NOTRE DAME — Students in social work Professor Frances Kominkiewicz’s Human Behavior and the Social Environment II class will host a community forum on the economy at the college on Thursday, March 26, from 5:30 p.m. in Vanders Venret Theatre in the Student Center. The free event, which takes place during Social Work Month, will focus on how the weakened economy affects not only jobs and home ownership, but also education and family violence. Guests will have an opportunity to network with the panelists and ask questions.

This year’s community forum is titled “Bringing About Change: Our Economy’s Effects on Education, Family Violence and Unemployment.” Speakers include Jerome McElroy, professor of economics, Saint Mary’s College, Mark Geissler, school social worker, South Bend Community School Corporation, Annie Envall, assistant director, S.O.S of Madison Center, South Bend, Judith Fox, associate clinical professor of law, Notre Dame Law School, Jessie Whittaker, director, LEND Homeownership Center and Thomas Kavanagh, vice president and general manager for Job Works, Inc.

Catholic-Episcopal vespers service slated March 25 and study group meets

SOUTH BEND — The feast of the Annunciation, Wednesday, March 25, will be celebrated with an ecumenical vespers service at St. Matthew’s Cathedral in South Bend. Bishop John M. D’Arcy and Bishop Ed Little, from the Episcopal Diocese of Northern Indiana, will attend the vespers service, scheduled for 7 p.m.

A reception will follow the vespers, and Bishop Little and Bishop D’Arcy will speak about their own devotion to Mary. Those attending are invited to bring an object of Marian devotion with them (a medal, an icon, etc.).

An ongoing ecumenical study group, reading the agreed Anglican-Roman Catholic document “Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ,” continues for the Mondays in March. The group meets at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, 915 N. Olive St. in South Bend. Meetings begin at 6 p.m. and include a soup dinner. All are welcome to attend.

Robert Kloska promoted to vice president of mission advancement at Holy Cross College

NOTRE DAME — Holy Cross College announces the promotion of Robert Kloska from director of campus ministry to vice president of mission advancement. He takes the reins of the mission advancement team at the college, a newly created office formed to champion growth through admissions, marketing and development.

Kloska joined the college in 1997 as a faculty member in philosophy and religious studies, and subsequently founded the Office of Campus Ministry and the first Holy Cross international experience program, both of which are now integral components of the college. Kloska was awarded the Outstanding Service Award on his 10-year anniversary at Holy Cross. A three-time cancer survivor, Kloska is a native of Elkhart and is a graduate of Marian High School, the University of Notre Dame, Wright’s in an accounting, and Franciscan University of Steubenville (master’s in philosophy). He is married to Margaret, and they have five children, three of whom attend St. Matthew Cathedral School.

Journey of St. Paul performed

SOUTH BEND — The diocesan Office of Family Life, in cooperation with Holy Cross Parish and Holy Cross College accounting office, is sponsoring two performances of the Word’s play, “The Journey of St. Paul,” on Tuesday and Wednesday, March 24 and 25 at 7 p.m. in Driscoll Auditorium at Holy Cross College. Admission to the play is free, but a ticket is required. A freewill offering will be taken up after each performance. Tickets may be picked up at the South Bend Chancery, second floor, 114 W. Wayne St., (574) 234-0607 or the Holy Cross College admissions office, (574) 239-8400.

Lenten Penance Service time corrected

FORT WAYNE — St. Vincent de Paul Parish will have a Lenten Penance Service Monday, April 6, at 7 p.m., not from 6-7 p.m.
Death penalty bill to change execution times

INDIANAPOLIS — Lethal injection, today’s state imposed method of execution may be less gruesome than a crucifixion, but the result is the same — the death of a human person. Death row inmates in Indiana spend an average of 12-15 years awaiting their own demise. According to clergy who work in prison ministry, the agony awaiting death may actually be worse than the execution itself.

This wait time could have been made even more tolerable had a provision of a bill to move death row inmates to solitary confinement been successful. Yet, concerns raised about this aspect of the bill by the Indiana Catholic Conference and those who minister to people on death row during a recent Senate hearing convinced the bill’s author to amend the bill to further investigate the housing of death row inmates through an interim study panel.

Senate Bill 296, authored by Sen. Brent Steele (R-Bedford), requires the sentencing policy of death row inmates through an amendment to study the issue during an interim study panel rather than make the change now. There was some belief that the current facility is older, less secure, and has fewer cameras for surveillance,” said Sen. Steele. “There are cameras in the halls, but not in the cells themselves,” he said. “But clergy testified that it would create a lot of problems allowing them to minister to the prisoners.

“Do we have to move to solitary confinement units for over a decade prior to their execution, which from the church’s perspective constituted cruel and inhumane punishment. Senate Bill 296, in its original form, would have granted the IDOC the ability to move death row inmates from the Indiana State Prison (ISP) in Michigan City to the nearby Westville Correctional Center (WCC). The facility, which previously was an insane asylum, was designed as a punitive unit for inmates who broke prison rules, said Deacon Lunsford. “Westville was never designed to be a place where prisoners would be placed for decades,” he said.

According to Lunsford, in 2003 the IDOC lobbied to get $4.5 million dollars to make renovations to the Indiana State Prison so that it could be the permanent home of death row inmates.

“The department got the money, electrified the doors, put in more cameras, and made other renovations and now three-and-a-half years later, they want to move inmates. It just doesn’t make any sense,” said Deacon Lunsford.

“Westville has very small cells, poor ventilation and only a tiny slit of a window,” said Deacon Lunsford. “Studies show that kind of treatment drives men crazy. At ISP the guys have a place to exercise and can get outside. We have Mass on Thursday mornings. It’s not just for Catholics, any Christian can come,” he said. “At Westville there are only solid blank walls.” ISP has bars on one side allowing for open communication. “We frequently talk and pray together in small groups,” said Deacon Lunsford.

“The death chamber is at ISP. Death row is at ISP. The law says we have to kill them,” said Lunsford, but asks, “Do we have to torture them for 20 years or more before we kill them?”

After listening to testimony in opposition to this aspect of the bill given by the Glenn Tebbe, executive director of the Indiana Catholic Conference, Deacon Lunsford, a letter by Father David T. Link, dean emeritus at the University of Notre Dame Law School, and other clergy members regarding the detrimental effects a change like this would create for death row inmates and clergy, Sen. Steele decided to have the bill amended to study the issue during an interim study panel rather than make the change now.

“There was some belief that the current facility is older, less secure, and has fewer cameras for surveillance,” said Sen. Steele. “There are cameras in the halls, but not in the cells themselves,” he said. “But clergy testified that it would create a lot of problems allowing them to minister to the prisoners.

“To put them in a more secure lockup would be a complete inconvenience for clergy. Newer does not always translate to better,” said Sen. Steele. “There are only 17 on death row, so we are not talking about a large number of inmates. It doesn’t mean we won’t change, but it doesn’t have to be changed right away. The summer study committee will give everyone ample time to testify who would like to do so,” said Sen. Steele. Another provision of SB 296 was the change in time of executions. Current law requires that executions take place after midnight and before the hour of sunrise. Senate Bill 296 removes the requirement of when an execution takes place. Lunsford said the time change may be a positive step for all involved. “Having an execution after midnight creates a hardship for everyone involved. It’s hard on the family, the clergy, the department of corrections staff,” he said.

“There are typically protestors who show up when there’s an execution, this causes a hardship for the local law enforcement officers too.”

Senate Bill 296 passed the Senate Feb. 23, 48-0, and has yet to receive a hearing in the House. The bill is assigned to the House Rules and Legislative Procedures Committee.
Feldenauer a perfect fit for Corpus Christi preschool

BY DIANE FREEBY

SOUTH BEND — “She’s kind of like an angel.”

Tracey Kambol echoes the sentiments of many parents whose children have experienced Peggy Foldenauer’s preschool program at Corpus Christi School in South Bend. Kambol says she enrolled her little boy because of Foldenauer’s reputation and the experience her older daughter had in preschool several years ago.

“The children are so interested in what she has to say,” says Kambol. “And she has the utmost patience with my son ... I know how patient and understanding she is.”

Frequently referred to as “Peggy’s Preschool,” hers is the face identified with a place where three, four and five year olds begin what she hopes will be a lifelong love of learning.

Foldenauer, a lifelong resident, graduated from Marian High School and Saint Mary’s College. That’s where she began her teaching career, working summers at the college’s Early Childhood Development Center (ECDC) before taking a break to marry and raise a family.

As her children began school, Foldenauer made her way back to the classroom as well, spending a few years teaching at Shamrock School before arriving at Corpus Christi. Now in her 12th year at Corpus, Foldenauer’s style is a perfect fit for the age group she loves to teach.

“I remember when I interviewed for this job,” recalls Foldenauer, “I told Mrs. Gibbs, ‘I just want you to know, I’m not a worksheet type teacher in preschool. I’m hands-on. We get loud sometimes, we get noisy.’”

She looked at me and she said, “I just want you to know, I’m not a worksheet type teacher in preschool. I’m hands-on. We get loud sometimes, we get noisy.”

“If you come over here, I’m going to help them. I’m going to always help them. They’ll be a part of the Corpus Christi family for many more years to come. Her love of teaching preschool and getting children excited about learning is what keeps her motivated. That, and the many families she gets to know every year.

“She’s my partner in the classroom,” says Foldenauer when asked about Thomas. “She is with the children working one-on-one. ... She has a great love of children. She loves children is not lost on the parents.”

Families from other parishes often send their children to Corpus Christi specifically because of the preschool program.

“I enjoy Mrs. Foldenauer very much,” says Mary Bramlett of nearby Christ the King and mother of six. “I’ve had children at other preschools, and I decided to try a Catholic-based program.”

A former Light of Learning Award winner, Foldenauer has a reputation for drawing others to Corpus Christi.

“She’s kind of like an angel.”

— Tracey Kambol

Peggy Foldenauer teaches the prekindergarten program at Corpus Christi School in South Bend.

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Most Precious Blood School celebrates 110 years

BY DEB WAGNER

FORT WAYNE — Most Precious Blood School celebrates its 110th anniversary in 2009 and invites those who were a part of history in the making to walk down memory lane with others who feel much the same and to newcomers the invitation extends to bask in the nostalgia. Most Precious Blood Parish will celebrate this landmark in its school’s history with a Mass and open house reception on March 22 beginning at 10:15 a.m.

It goes back to at least 1898. February 28, 1898 marks the date when plans were formalized and the building of a school and church to care for the approximately 155 Catholic families attending St. Mary’s Church, St. Paul’s and the cathedral.

During the summer months of 1898, the rectory and convent were built. On the day of dedication, Bishop Joseph Rademacher stated that the parish was to be comprised of parish families.

The church began laying out history rather quickly. June 4, 1899 saw first holy Communion celebrated for the first time in Most Precious Blood Parish, with 20 children taking part. Bishop Herman Joseph Alerding confirmed 55 persons on July 14, 1901.

The winter of 1902-1903 was most severe and on several occasions the thermometer dipped as low as minus 20 degrees. As a result, school was dismissed for several days because the heating system was inadequate for such extreme temperatures. The decision was made to switch the heating system from hot water to that of steam. This proved to be a satisfactory measure and brought about a booming 1903-1904 school year.

By 1907, bowling alleys, still a unique feature for the school today, were added to the basement of the school. The 1912-1913 school year opened on Sept. 9 with an attendance of 220 children. Out of necessity, the fifth room was added again after being discontinued several years previously. There were 252 families in the parish at this time.

At the beginning of the 1929-1930 school year, some 450 students were taught in a school that was designed to accommodate 250. Parishioners and pastor alike realized the need for a new school to be built.

The Great Depression hit everyone hard and Most Precious Blood was no exception. However, 1947 seemed to be a year of comeback. On Aug. 29, a school bus was purchased for the parish to transport children living in outlying parish districts into the school. It was also the year when kindergarten was offered at the school for the first time.

This good fortune spilled over to 1948 when the first Catholic Parent Teacher Association with 250 members was organized for the first time. The intended goal was to introduce parents and teachers such that they collaboratively helped in the growth of the school’s students.

Most Precious Blood Parish and School continued to see steady growth. By the time the last parish census was taken in 1961, there were 1,132 families representing 3,820 individuals of whom 618 were students.

Today Most Precious Blood School provides educational services to children beginning at age 3. Music, computer, art, physical education, health, library, choir, band, handbells and TV production classes, which are supported through a local grant and air weekly on two local cable channels, are only a few of the programs offered at Most Precious Blood School.

They also offer many support-ive programs and services such as Title I, speech and physical therapy services through Fort Wayne Community Schools. They also have a school counselor on staff.

Most Precious Blood School has an elected advisory school board that meets monthly, and two active school organizations — the Home and School Association and the Athletic Association. The Athletic Association operates under the guidance of the Catholic Youth Organization.

Most Precious Blood School has been ranked by the Indiana Department of Education with the highest ranking — exemplary status — for two years — 2006 and 2007.

Many thanks are extended to the Most Precious Blood priests who laid the foundation, the dedication of many multigenerational families, faculty, staff and students who contribute to the 110 years of Most Precious Blood School as it exists today.
BISHOP DWENGER STUDENTS SPEAK FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT

Hundreds of students and many teachers, signed postcards and addressed red envelopes as a way to petition the state and federal legislators to oppose the Freedom of Choice Act, which would remove any restrictions regarding the abortion industry. Several hundred will be sent to U.S. senators Richard Lugar and Evan Bayh, 3rd District Representative Mark Souder, and Indiana House Speaker Pat Bauer.

ST. PATRICK’S DAY MASS IN FORT WAYNE

Referring to the Gospel of Christ in the temple marketplace, Bishop John M. D’Arcy told a packed church that “Christ’s favorite temple is your heart and that is where he longs to be; please invite him in.” At lunch, he chatted with Ryan Nguyen, left, and Duc Phan.

CELTIC CROSS DEDICATED

As part of the St. Patrick’s Day celebrations, which took place March 14 at St. Patrick Church in South Bend, a marble Celtic cross, carved of the marble from recent church renovations, was dedicated. Pictured on the left is St. Patrick and St. Hedwig pastor Father Leonard Chrobot and Holy Cross Father Cornelius Ryan, pastor of Little Flower Parish in South Bend.

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and about which he feels passion-
on fidelity to the words he received
of early Christian life. Paul insists
presence are central elements of the
about the holy Eucharist for quite
which indicates that he has known
namely, that the Lord on the night
St. Paul says, “I received from the
first letter to the Corinthians, writ-
ten about A.D. 57, is the earliest
written record of the Eucharist, and
St. Paul says, “I received from the
Lord what I handed on to you,
name, that the Lord on the night
he was betrayed...” Paul continues
with the words of consecration,
which indicates that he has known
about the holy Eucharist for quite
some time. From Paul’s words we
see that, from the very beginning of
the Christian communities, the
Eucharist and belief in the real
presence are central elements of the
Christian tradition and regular parts
of early Christian life. Paul insists
on fidelity to the words he received
and about which he feels passion-
ately commissioned to pass along
to whoever would listen.

What the word ‘is’
means

A common objection of non-
Catholics to our Catholic belief in
the real presence is that our
eucharistic celebration should be
considered simply a memorial or a
symbolic remembrance of the
words Jesus spoke at the Last
Supper. The passage from 1
Corinthians is the last of four sepa-
rate times in the New Testament
when Jesus speaks of his church:
“... this is my body ... this is my blood.”
None of the three Synoptic Gospel
accounts (Mark, Matthew, an
Luke) talk about the Last
Supper as just a reminder or sim-
ilar. Isn’t it a bit ironic that some
Protestant traditions interpret the
cup quite literally in every other
instance but this one?

So how should we interpret
Jesus’ word “is”? St. Paul gives the
early Christian understanding when he writes: “Is not the cup of
blessing we bless a sharing in the
blood of Christ? And is not the bread we break a sharing in the
body of Christ?” It is clear that he
is reaffirming for the Corinthians
that, when they receive the bread
and wine, they are participating in
the very body and blood of Christ
himself. In Pope Benedict’s general
address on Sept. 24, 2008 (Lk 22:15),
words at the Last Supper. He says that
they “... are truly at the center of
the church’s life: the church is built
on this center... they testify that
the Eucharist illumes the curse of
the Cross, making it a blessing.”

Pope Benedict goes on to explain
that, when Paul says Jesus’ words
of institution, “This is my body,”
contains all that we are, all that the
blessing we bless a sharing in the
deep and being of God.

What is your understanding of
sacrament? Of the Eucharist as
sacrament? Of yourself as sacra-
ment to others? How do you
become worthy recipients of the
sacrament of Eucharist?

Eucharistic transformations

Inherent in the Eucharist are
two transformations. The first
transformation is called transsub-
stantiation — the changing of bread
and wine into body and blood. The
second transformation is when we,
who receive the Eucharist, are
transformed more fully into
Christ’s body on earth. This second
transformation is what is pro-
claimed in Eucharistic Prayer III.

It is for this reason that St. Paul
advocates the Corinthians,
“Would you offer yourself for the
church of God, and embarrass
those who have nothing? What can
I say to you? Shall I praise you?
Certainly not in this matter?”

He instructs the Christian community
about proper reception of the
Eucharist: “This means that who-
ever eats the bread or drinks the
cup of the Lord unworthily sins
against the body and blood of the
Lord. A man should examine him-
self first; only then should he eat
of the bread and drink of the cup.”

Why would Paul stress the impor-
tance of being worthy to receive if
these were merely physical objects of
bread and wine? With our belief
in the real presence, we affirm that,
at the Eucharist, the full reality of
God’s sacrament of love, Jesus
Christ, becomes visible and acces-
sible for us and for all.

Franciscan Father Thomas
Richstatter, in his article “The
Sacrament of the Eucharist: What
Has Happened to My Devotion?”
says, “The Eucharist is not only
one of the seven sacraments, it is
in a sense the sacrament — for it
contains all that we are, all that the
church is, all that Jesus is and says
of God.”

What is your understanding of
sacrament? Of the Eucharist as
sacrament? Of yourself as sacra-
ment to others? How do you
become worthy recipients of the
sacrament of Eucharist?

The fourth week of Lent brings the Catholic faithful to the half way point on their journey of
increased prayer, sacrifice and service. It’s a good time to stop and reflect on how the journey has
unfolded so far. It is also a time to renew those initial choices to fast and add or increase a special
service. It’s not too late to boldly continue the works of preparation needed to soften our hearts for
Eastertide. (Scripture taken from the New American Bible Catholic edition.)
SPRING SPORTS

With the warmer weather young athletes meet the green at diamonds, links and tracks and fields

FORT WAYNE — For many athletes not participating in other sports throughout the year, conditioning for the 2009 spring sports season began last fall or possibly, shortly after the last day of the 2008 season. But no matter how long the wait, Mother Nature shows sure signs that warmer weather is just around the corner and the games, matches and meets can begin. At Bishop Luers High School, the Knights are charted to perform well in Fort Wayne’s Summit Athletic Conference (SAC) and with competitors around the state of Indiana.

Baseball

The 2008 Class 2-A state champions from Bishop Luers High School will officially begin preparing for their 2009 season this week.

Unsure of his final roster, Coach Gary Rogers is predicting that Aaron Frankle will be the lone senior to head a young Knights’ team this year. Franke, who hit .336 last season, will be joined by sophomores, Josh Ulrey, Charlie Pfister and Steve Kiemaier, who also saw varsity playing time for the reignig champs and will be expected to carry this years’ pitching load and play key positions when not on the mound. Junior Tim Kawiecki and Pfister will handle the catching duties and outfielder Qwayan Mattson also returns.

Newcomers that could move into the lineup are senior Carson Bradley and junior Jake Crouch. Sorely missed from last year’s Knights are 10 seniors, including all-state selections, Kevin Kiemaier and Tyler Watts, who led Bishop Luers to a 30-3 record. As he begins his 23rd season as head coach, Rogers has the same goals as every other year: Win 20 games and a state championship. Under Rogers’ reign, the Knights have a record of 352-301, three sectional titles, one regional championship, four-year catcher, Haylee Freiburger to have a big impact for this year’s team include: being a complete team, creating a broth- er in the sport.

Golf

Stepping into the head coaching spot for the Bishop Luers’ Knights boys’ golf team for the first time will be Tom O’Brien. O’Brien is pleased to have the knowledge of assistants Steve Gillie and Ryan Lefflers who will stay on board as assistants. Father of Bishop Luers all-state golfer Kristi O’Brien, O’Brien has coached the girls’ team for the past two years winning the SAC in 2007 and as runner-ups in 2008. The top returning golfer for the Knights is senior Cody Miller, who will be joined by classmates Ryan Eifrid and Joe Christen. Juniors Andy Litchfield and David Blomke and sophomores Hugh Baldus and Blake Baxter also are back for the Knights. Five newcomers are expected to compete for Bishop Luers who finished with a 10-2 head to head record in 2008.

O’Brien summarized, “Our goal is always to win the SAC, maximize our talent and for each golfer to improve their game. We hope to have our golfers shooting their best by section time.” The team whose home links is Donald Ross will compete in four invita- tions before the May 23 SAC game at Brookwood. O’Brien also thrilled to have two “JV only” tournaments on the schedule.

LaCrosse

The game of lacrosse can most simply be described as a mixture of soccer and hockey. The playing field consists of three defensemen, three attackers, three midfielders and a goalie who play four quarters of 12 minutes each.

Bishop Luers High School is one of just three teams in the Fort Wayne area to have lacrosse group and must travel to South Bend and Indianapolis schools the first half of their season.

The Knights’ 2009 home stand will begin on March 28 under the direction of first-year head coach Lonnie Nichter. Nichter, who has assisted at Luers the past three years, will be joined by several assistants including his brother Brent, a former state leading scor- er in the sport.

Practicing since mid-February, the team finished right around 500 last season with a first-round play- off loss to Westfield.

Nichter explained that his goals for this year’s team include: being a complete team, creating a broth- erly attitude to work things out on the field; keeping all members of the team on the same page in a game situation; developing each young man and gaining recogni- tion for the sport.

Elliott Greff, Lester Hall, Dan Rodenbeck, Jordan Crates and Rudy Trevino all return from a year ago for the Knights.

Tennis

With a tough conference this year, Coach Brady McArdle feels the Bishop Luers Knights girls’ tennis team will need to play great tennis to stay in the mix. The 2008 sectional champs lost three seniors who will be hard to replace — Amber Gottfried, Brittany Witte and Lauren Tobe. However, the Knights roster listed 13 girls, the first morning of condi- tioning, up from 36 a year ago. Although McArdle does not cut any players, the fourth-year head coach expects the final number to decline by about 10 girls when conditioning is over. Varsity players back for the

Knights, who placed second in the SAC last year, are: Katy Konzem, Rachael Anspach, Mandy Scher and Lauren Hellingr. McArdle and assistant Staci Kichefski also expect Jordan McArdle, Mary Carrier, Laura Fennelly, Alicia Freiburger to have a big impact this season.

“Our goal is to play with passion and see where we end up. I think it will be a good season and I am looking forward to it,” concluded McArdle.

Track

“With the excellent leadership of our upper-class members we are looking forward to an exciting sea- son,” said Coach Jason Draper.

Bishop Luers has 26 boys and 31 girls on the track team for the 2009 season. Draper feels very optimistic about the young athletes in the program with 17 freshman and 20 sophomores on the team.

The Knights lost 11 seniors from the 2008 season, including three-time state qualifier Melanie Huhn in the throwing events and pole vault state qualifi- er Andy LaMaster. They are both competing at the college level this spring in track and field along with 11 other graduates from Bishop Luers: Carolyn Harless, Porsche Jackson, Krista Lefflers, Aaron Myers, Annette Willman, Kristen Daniels, Jenna Oberley, Zack Showers, Ben Hendricks and Kaitlyn Shifley.

Draper, who ran track at the University of Indianapolis and now teaches physics, has been coaching track at Bishop Luers for 12 years, 10 as head coach. He and his assistants have over 50 years combined experience.

Softball

Although he is still in the process of tryouts, Coach Jeff Doll believes, “We will be tested in spots, but should have a pretty good team this year.”

The Knights’ softball team lost four seniors to graduation, includ- ing four-year catcher, Haylee Eckert, but return nine varsity members of the 2008 sectional championship team. Senior outfielder Cali Shaw and senior short- stop Kelsey Wyss are back, along with Amy Morrison, Bishop Luers’ junior pitcher with over 300 strike-outs, four no-hitters and only four walks logged a year ago. The bases will be well covered by the talent of returnees Kristy Gerardo, Lauren Oberley and Alexis Devido.

In his fourth season, Doll, whose team lost 4-2 in the regionals to Cass last year, claims his goal for this team is the same as in years past — to win the SAC and go as far as we can in the post sea- son.”

Bishop Luers will play 26 games on their regular season with a two-game tournament at Bluffton mid-way before starting the state tournament.

Watch upcoming issues ... for a spring sports round-up for Marian and Saint Joseph’s High Schools.
Today's Catholic joins the Serra Club in sponsoring a new feature, the All-Diocese Team, highlighting athletes from Catholic high schools in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. These student-athletes are recognized in character, sportsmanship, leadership, athletics and Catholic values. The athletes are selected by their coaches. The All Diocese Teams will be featured three times during the year: for fall, winter and spring sports.
Boys swimming
Patrick Rice, senior, St. Michael, Plymouth, 100 fly
David Shafer, sophomore, 500 freestyle
Sam Johnson, freshman, St. Mary, Fort Wayne, 130 weight class
Sean Hendricks, senior, Christ the King, 100 breast-stroke

Boys swimming
Kris Andorfer, senior, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, freestyle
David Rodenbeck, senior, St. Aloysius, individual medley
Cody Miller, senior, St. Joseph-Hessen Cassel, freestyle

Girls swimming
Lauren Hellinger, senior, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, relay teams
Erin Hipkind, freshman, St. Joseph, Roanoke, freestyle

Girls basketball
Kelsey Wyss, senior, St. Joseph-Hessen Cassel, guard
Mary Hathaway, senior, forward

Wrestlers
Tony Lovejoy, junior, St. Therese, all around gymnast

Gymnastics
Audrey Griebel, St. Rose, Monroeville, 125 weight class

BISHOP LUERS Boys basketball
Deshaun Thomas, senior, junior, forward
Sean Day, senior, St. John the Baptist, Fort Wayne, center

Girls basketball
Andrea Filler, last year’s freshman standout for the Bishop Dwenger softball team is off to a solid start for the 2009 spring season. The Saints lost seven members from 2008 with goals to: Win 20 games, win the SAC and bring home a sectional title. Although the Saints lost three key players to graduation — Brian Isenberger and Cory Sokolowski who are now playing at Saint Francis and Matt Maringer who will be signing up at the University of Indianapolis — the Saints returning list is deep. Pitchers Scott Scheumann, Trevor Yerrick, Matt DeJong and Brennan Gallagher will be back on the mound. Also, returning are Dan Maringer, Corey Marchant, Ryan Fenker and Alex Bloom.

Girls swimming
Nichole Landon, junior, St. Therese, relay teams

Boys' track
At an indoor meet at Taylor University, the Bishop Dwenger boys’ track team got off to a fine start. A placed Coach Herb Widner reported, “We had several third place finishes and a few seconds. I was pleasantly surprised with the effort.”

Widner, who is in his rookie season as head coach, has been the assistant for the Saints for the past 12 years and spent seven years at Bishop Luers and another 15 in the Catholic Youth League (CYO). “This year, Widner’s goals are to “finish in the top four of the conference and push as many athletes out of the sectional as we can.”

The Saints have around 60 young men conditioning and expect a few more basketball players to join. Seniors Robbie Kimes (hurdles and 400M), sprinter Joey Colone and Alex Bivas (high jump) return for the 2009 season. Also, noteworthy, are juniors Joel Beier (shot put and long jump) and hurdler, Bob Widner. The Saints have a big hole to fill with the loss of school record-setting pole-vaulter and state runner-up Kevin Schipper and about a dozen seniors from a year ago.

BY MICHELLE CASTLEMAN
FORT WAYNE — When reporting the coaching assignments for the upcoming season, Bishop Dwenger Athletic Director Andy Johns, summed up the 2008 season by saying, “It was a good spring.” To name just a few of the Saints accolades, the softball, tennis and golf teams were crowned sectional champs. Bishop Dwenger also boasted a state runner-up in pole vaulter Kevin Schipper. As the weather breaks and activity resumes on the courts, diamonds, tracks and links, 2009 promises to hold more stellar performances for BD athletes.

Baseball
With a 337-218 record, three SAC titles and six sectional championships under his belt, Coach Larry Windwiller brings more than 20 years of coaching experience to the Bishop Dwenger baseball field.

Expectations are high this season to improve on a 3-6 Summit Athletic Conference (SAC) finish from 2008 with goals to: Win 20 games, win the SAC and bring home a sectional title. Although the Saints lost three key players to graduation — Brian Isenberger and Cory Sokolowski who are now playing at Saint Francis and Matt Maringer who will be signing up at the University of Indianapolis — the Saints returning list is deep. Pitchers Scott Scheumann, Trevor Yerrick, Matt DeJong and Brennan Gallagher will be back on the mound. Also, returning are Dan Maringer, Corey Marchant, Ryan Fenker and Alex Bloom.

First baseman Steve Secoloff led his team to a home run a year ago with ten, a .406 batting average and 30 RBIs.

Newcomers to watch for will be Mike Mugg, Brad Freiburger, Jake Markland, Justyn Weiler and Scott McIwlan. The Saints will kick off their 2009 schedule with a scrimmage against North Side on March 25.

Tennis
With loads of talent returning, the Bishop Dwenger tennis team is hoping for another great season. The Saints’ No. 1 doubles, Allie Beach and Danielle Denihan, along with Aslynn Rang No. 1 singles last year, Alyssa Lotspeich, No. 3; Emily Hambel, No. 2 doubles; several promising junior varsity players and a handful of newcomers will make for a strong group in 2009.

Coach Anne Schenkel, in her sixth season as head coach, remarks, “These girls are awesome and a great group of hard working young ladies. They are great sports and lots of fun to coach. I am looking forward to the season.”

Beginning April 14, the Saints, will begin two three duel matches her week. They also have slated a couple of invitational matches for this spring. Post-season play will begin May 21 with sectionals.

Softball
Andrea Filler, last year’s freshman phenomenon, returns as this year’s sophomore standout for the Bishop Dwenger Saints’ softball team. Filler led the 2008 sectional champs in batting average, ace pitching and spectacular plays at short stop. Catcher Elaine Ronick and Ashley Barkett (pitcher, out-field) are also back with varsity kudos for the sophomore class.

Coach Dave Moyer will call upon former two-time all conference, Lauren Rosworm, Kayleen Earnest and Maureen Denihan, who plays first base, for leadership on the field. Outfielders Mary Black, a senior, and Anna Garner, round out the list of returnees.

Moyer has coached at Bishop Dwenger the past 13 years — seven at the junior varsity level and the past six as head coach.

Optional preseason conditioning began the last week of November for those not involved in a winter sport and the final team tryouts will be trimmed up at the time of print.

“It is hard to tell much in the gym. We hope to make noted improvement on last year’s record and accomplishments,” summarized Moyer April 7 marks the start of a competitive season, which runs through the state tournament in June.

Girls’ track
With a strong performance at Taylor University, Coach Jessica Hayes and the Bishop Dwenger girls’ track team are off to a solid start for the 2009 spring season. The Saints competed on Saturday, March 7, in an indoor meet paced by freshman Chris Widner’s first-place finish in the shot put. In her second (ninth overall) season as head coach at Bishop Dwenger, Hayes reports 59 girls out for the team. Most of these are freshman and sophomores.

A hopeful Hayes added, “It is exciting to see what these new athletes are capable of.”

The Saints lost seven members of the 2008 team to graduation and a few current juniors and seniors will be parading employment opportunities this spring. Varsity athletes returning for the Saints include: Mary Marqueling in the pole vault, Sarah Polhamus in the pole vault; distance runners Anne Venderley and Julia Lee; hurlers Natalie Kirk and Lauren Kelt; Yvonne Rush, whose specialty is the high jump; and sprinter Lauren Palmer.

Newcomers to keep an eye on to Widner will be: Mary Beier, Aubrey Schrader and Sarah Kleber in mid-distance events and speedsters Danielle Messman and Katie Rosswurm.

With a year under her belt and all of her full-time staff returning, Hayes explained, “It helps that we will have more experience heading into this season.”

The outdoor meets for the Saints will begin on March 25 when Bishop Dwenger goes head to head with longtime rival Bishop Luers. Racing will continue twice a week after Easter until the tournament begins in mid-May.
Special Olympics is more than just exercise

BY LAUREN CAGGIANO

FORT WAYNE — Sometimes our ultimate calling is more obvious than we think.

For Donna Hazelett, it was a soft spot for developmentally disabled children and love of sports that paved the way for her current volunteer position.

Hazelett is the mother of a 21-year old mildly mentally handicapped daughter, Alise, and a middle school physical education teacher in Fort Wayne. These two hats ultimately led her to Special Olympics Allen County, a free program that provides year-round sports training and athletic competition for children and adults with intellectual disabilities.

Through this program, these athletes can engage in local and statewide competitions in bowling, ice skating, track and field, swimming, basketball, golf and other sports in an empowering environment. In turn, Special Olympics provides uniforms, transportation, coaching support staff and a facility. A handful of dedicated volunteers assist with such duties as coaching. About 25 athletes, ranging from grade school age to adult, are active in the Allen County program, Hazelett noted.

And there’s no lack of enthusiasm among the athletes. Hazelett, who is responsible for developing the sports programs, said she attributes this to the empowering environment the volunteers have created and strive to maintain.

“They’re so excited to get to practice because they get to see their friends,” she said. “They can be successful and not do it a certain way.”

The athletes are truly happy to be there and they walk away up with a self-esteem boost every time they play, Hazelett said. It’s not uncommon for the athletes to say they don’t want to go home following an exciting practice or game.

The volunteers’ attitudes are equally important in the success of the program. And Hazelett said it’s all a matter of perspective when it comes to working with the mentally-handicapped population.

“We (do it) because we love the kids and have a blast,” she said. “The kids are all about winning and we don’t look at them as ‘handicapped.’”

The Special Olympics program provides more than just exercise.

“We’re teaching skills and values — we don’t just throw a ball out,” she said.

And with an estimated 3,400 developmentally-disabled people in Allen County, there’s no shortage of potential athletes. The chapter was founded in September 2007, and since then, Hazelett had played a critical role in raising awareness. But getting the word out in the school system has been a challenge.

“We want people to know we have a program and need athletes,” Hazelett said.

Luckily, the organization is gaining more publicity each year. At the second annual Polar Bear Plunge in Mirror Lake at the University of Saint Francis, Special Olympics raised about $18,000. Members of the community, including Mayor Tom Henry, jumped in the lake in the sub-zero temperatures to raise money for the cause. Hazelett believes this event is a sign of good things to come for the organization. And looking back, it’s clear that God had a hand in her fate, Hazelett said.

While in college, she worked as volunteer with children with disabilities. So when Alise was born with a disability, Hazelett was well equipped with the tools to handle this challenge. And later as a physical education teacher, she was able to merge her love of sports with education.

“I liked sports so much and have that experience so it just fell into place,” she said about her attraction to the organization.

Whatever the future holds for the organization, Hazelett has faith in God’s plan: “There’s a reason for (doing) this... that picture’s gonna come to me,” she said.

Special Olympics is in need of dedicated volunteers, fans and sponsors. To find out more about how to support them, visit www.specialolympicsallencounty.org, or call (260) 402-5399.

Matt Blauvelt from St. Rose, Monroeville, is shown with Donna and Alise Hazelett, parishioners of St Joseph, Fort Wayne, having fun at basketball practice. March has been declared Disability Awareness Month by Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels.
Saint Joseph’s High School hockey team state runner-up

SOUTH BEND — The Saint Joe Icers ended a successful season with a number two finish in the 4-A State Championship game. The season highlights included a second place finish in the Blue Division of the St. Charles Invitational Tournament in Columbus, Ohio; a second-place finish in the Michiana High School Hockey League with a record of 11-3-1, and a post-season league tournament championship, outscoring opponents 27-2.

Saint Joe entered the state 4-A tournament seeded No. 6. It was all Saint Joe with wins over Columbus, 6-3, Carroll, 4-3, and Park Tudor, 6-2. Robert Jamieson came away from the weekend with the Hobey Baker Award for exemplary character and sportsmanship. The team entered the 4-A State Championship game with a season record of 25-9-3 with the last loss in mid-January. The loss to two-time defending champions Carmel Gold, 3-2, was a heartbreaker, but this team has so much to celebrate.

The fan support at the championship game was fabulous. Parents, students and faculty in attendance left no doubt in the minds of all those present that the Saint Joe community has great pride in this team and looks forward to next season.

This year’s team has no seniors so the outlook for next year is exceedingly bright. Head Coach Jim Scarpone and assistants Matt Cielen and Chris Kleva (1984 Saint Joe graduate) led this team that was bolstered by late additions freshman Kevin Kruzewski and sophomore Joey McCombs. Late season recovery from injuries brought junior Michael Potter and freshman Michael McFadden back to the lineup.

The last state championship was a 3-A win in 1989. Perhaps in 2010 the state championship will once again belong to Saint Joe.

Those on the team are juniors Josh McMillan, Al Harding, Robert Jamieson, Ryan Sopczynski, Michael Potter; sophomores Ian Lewis, Ethan Palmer, Jake Radle, Drake Fisher, Joey McCombs, Tim Heisler, Nick Kleva, Zach Fussey; freshmen Tyler Christensen, Kevin Kruzewski and Michael McFadden.

Luers wins 2-A regional

The Fort Wayne Bishop Luers High School boys’ basketball team defeated Tipton March 14, 60-53, winning the 2-A regional and will now vie for a semi-state crown on March 21 when they take on North Judson. Deshaun Thomas scored 26 points for the Knights.

Bishop Dwenger gymnasts head to state

FORT WAYNE — The Bishop Dwenger High School Gymnastics Team, which won regionals last weekend will head to state finals competition on March 21.

The Saints scored a total of 113.175 beating Fort Wayne Snider who scored 105.55 for second place. Alicia Roche took the all-around with a score of 38.35 and Brittany Trahin took third with 37.725. Placing for the Saints in individual events:

- Bars — second, Brittany Trahin, 9.45; third, Grace Schenkel, 9.4; fourth, Alicia Roche, 9.25.
- Vault — first, Brittany Trahin, 9.65; third, Alicia Roche, 9.55; fourth, Ashley Faghihi, 9.35.
- Floor — first, Alicia Roche, 9.8; second, Brittany Trahin, 9.675; fourth, Katherine Nix, 9.5.
- Beam — first, Alicia Roche, 9.75

The state finals are Saturday, March 21, with opening ceremonies at 12:30 p.m. and competition at 1 p.m. at Perry Meridian High School, 401 W. Meridian School Rd., Indianapolis. Admission is $8.
JV CHAMPIONS HAPPY TO BE NO. 1

Holy Cross combined fifth-and-sixth-grade boy’s team defeated St. Pius sixth-grade A team Feb. 21, 36-32, for the B team championship. The team includes: front row, from left, Josh Rodriguez, Brendan Chapelle, John Watkins, Caleb Stobo and Connor Gentry; middle row, John Wilson, Mark Madden, Sam Nolan and Peter Lacopo; back row players, Jacob Jobe and Conner Futa, back row coaches Chad Gentry, Jason Ball, Kevin Futa and Joe Perez.

BISHOP DWENGER VARSITY CHEERLEADERS CROWNED GRAND NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

The Bishop Dwenger cheerleaders competed in Orlando, Fla., at the Contest of Champions Nationals. The squad won the Large Varsity National Title. They were awarded the Level 5 High Score Award, which includes teams with the highest skill level at the competition. On top of both of those awards, they were crowned the Grand National Champion awarded to the team with the highest score in the competition regardless of division or size. The team includes Jennifer Bellio, Krissy Davis, Phoebe Davis, Ashley Densberger, Jennifer Downey, Morgan Eifert, Sarah Gorman, Leah Helmer, Natalie Kirk, Nikki Martino, Victoria Myers, Katie Paladin, Andrea Pelkington, Erica Pelkington, Jordan Potosky, Ashley Reed, Grace Schenkel and Amanda Tomlinson. The squad is coached by Amy Gonzagowski, Vicki Kuker and Doris Derheimer.

Dwenger sports rugby team

FORT WAYNE — Although not a sanctioned sport in the IHSAA, rugby continues to be a popular club sport at Bishop Dwenger High School.

The Saints recently participated in a pre season tournament for the “Catholic Cup” for five Indiana Catholic teams. Host Indianapolis Cathedral won both the “A” (varsity) and “B” (junior varsity) brackets at the jamboree, but Coach Joe DiFilippo felt his team “looked really good.”

The Bishop Dwenger team roster for 2009 lists 51 members with strong leadership from seniors and 2008 Indiana All-Stars: Isaac Hall, Tyler Gallaway, Michael Fisher, Tom Morken, Brian Porter and Patrick Porter (Div II).

DiFilippo added, “The experience we have returning will really help this season. We also have a lot of new players on our ‘B’ side who are learning quickly.”

DiFilippo coached club rugby in Fort Wayne in the 1970s and started the program at Bishop Dwenger in 2003 when his son wanted to play. His son is now teaching at St. Joseph-St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School and assisting

DiFilippo with the Saints. A year ago, Bishop Dwenger finished 4-4. Numerous injuries forced them to withdraw from the state tournament, but they did compete in the Division II tournament before losing to Lawrence North, 12-10.

Facilities Manager

Saint Joseph Parish, South Bend seeks full-time Facilities Manager responsible for maintenance, management and improvement of parish buildings and grounds and onsite supervision of maintenance and custodial personnel and contracted services. Duties include assisting in development of capital budgets; providing vision and establishing policy related to buildings/grounds maintenance, development and improvement; supervision and ongoing evaluation of capital projects; budgetary oversight of areas pertaining to building and grounds; and the monitoring of inventory and maintaining of documentation pertaining to facility specifications, upkeep and condition.

Qualified applicants will have a high school diploma with background/experience in maintenance and supervision, good communication skills, computer skills (spreadsheets, word processing, emailing), availability outside of normal working hours to respond to issues or emergencies, as well as a collaborative spirit and desire to contribute to the mission of the parish. Salary commensurate with education/experience and in compliance w/diocesan guidelines. Send letter of introduction and resume to: Facilities Manager Search Committee, Saint Joseph Parish, 226 N. Hill St., South Bend 46617. Questions may be directed to Fr. John DeRiso, CSC, Pastor, at (574) 234-3134.

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The first 50 days

As promised, during the first 50 days of the Obama administration a renewed assault on human life has begun.

On Jan. 23, just three days after taking the oath of office, President Obama rescinded the Mexico City policy. The Mexico City policy was first instituted by President Reagan and required that non-governmental organizations, which received U.S. funding throughout the world, agree as a condition of their receipt of funds that they would neither perform nor actively promote abortion as a method of family planning in other nations. In other words, this policy of the United States kept tax dollars from being used to perform abortions in other parts of the world by such groups as Planned Parenthood. With President Obama’s rescinding of this policy, U.S. tax money will now be used throughout the world to promote and perform abortions.

On Feb. 27, President Obama directed the Department of Health and Human Services to rescind the “conscience clause” that protects healthcare personnel from pressure to participate in procedures they regard as immoral. This means that physicians, pharmacists, nurses and other personnel could be forced by law to participate in abortions, the distribution of contraception, the distribution of the “morning after” pill, etc.

Although the final form of a revised regulation is still pending, it is hard not to see this move as an attempt to impose the anti-life ideology on all those who work in the health care field.

On March 2, President Obama nominated Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sibelius as the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

Gov. Sibelius is known to be staunch, and some would even say extremist, in her pro-abortion policies. She has consistently voted legislation in her state, which would have outlawed late-term abortions, she has raised funds for Planned Parenthood and she has accepted large donations for her political career from George Tiller, the notorious specialist in late-term abortions.

If confirmed, Gov. Sibelius would have enormous influence over health care policy in this country, and her position would offer her a powerful platform to proliferate more and more extreme abortion policies. Incidentally, Sibelius is Catholic and has been asked by many because of her action in support of abortion, to refrain from receiving holy Communion.

On March 9, President Obama signed an executive order allowing federally-funded researchers to use new embryonic stem-cell lines. In essence, this means that tax money will now be used to destroy human embryos for the purpose of scientific research.

It should be noted that embryonic stem cells have offered not even the glimmer of a hope of cures for various diseases, while the use of adult stem cells for research, which poses no ethical problems, has already produced dozens of effective treatments. Even if embryonic stem cells did show promise, the use and destruction of human beings for the benefit of other human beings is gravely immoral.

Just the facts

It is not the intention of this publication to issue a public attack on President Obama. In fact, all of us should be praying that God fill him with wisdom and strength to fulfill the duty that he has taken on.

Nonetheless, we Catholics have a duty continually to speak out against the many attacks being perpetrated on human life, attacks that happen in both direct ways and in subtle ways. Because the president of the United States wields enormous power to set policy, to influence legislation and to direct federal funds, we must all take clear notice of the ways in which President Obama’s actions have already attacked the dignity of human life.

If these attacks on human life have come in only the first 50 days, what attacks on human life will the other 1,410 days hold?
Choose the light of Jesus

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

Msgr. Owen F. Campion

4th Sunday of Lent
Jn 3:14-21

The Second Book of Chronicles provides this Lenten weekend with its first reading. As the title of this book implies, its purpose is to record the history of God’s people. However, always the most important aspect of their history was religious.

Chronicled was written about 1,000 years before Jesus. The identity of its author is unknown. A constant refrain, and source of grief, among the prophets and the devout of ancient Israel was the sinfulness of the people and most particularly of the kings. This sinfulness was the root of all the nation’s problems. God caused no distress or hardship. Rather, the people themselves upset the order of life and brought discord into the nation’s problems. God caused no distress or hardship. Rather, the people themselves upset the order of life and brought discord into the nation’s problems. God caused no distress or hardship. Rather, the people themselves upset the order of life and brought discord into the nation’s problems. God caused no distress or hardship. Rather, the people themselves upset the order of life and brought discord into the nation’s problems. God caused no distress or hardship. 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Chronicled was written about 1,000 years before Jesus. The identity of its author is unknown. A constant refrain, and source of grief, among the prophets and the devout of ancient Israel was the sinfulness of the people and most particularly of the kings. This sinfulness was the root of all the nation’s problems. God caused no distress or hardship. Rather, the people themselves upset the order of life and brought discord into their midst by failing to obey God’s holy law.

As a result, they were the vic-}
Tradition says Mary was born in Jerusalem or Zippori

**Where was the Blessed Virgin Mary born?**

One tradition says the Blessed Virgin Mary was born in Jerusalem where her parents St. Anne and St. Joachim lived. The Church of St. Anne was built on the spot where the parents of Mary supposedly lived.

Baelderke says this church dates from the time of the Crusades and remains intact. It was built in 1142 by Avda, the widow of Baldwin I, the first king of Jerusalem. The crypt of the church is in a grotto and it is thought to be Mary’s birthplace.

Another tradition says the Blessed Virgin Mary was born at the village of Zippori, also called Sepphoris and Dioscearea. This town is three miles northwest of Nazareth. The Gospels do not record that Jesus ever visited Zippori, but it is likely, since Jesus’ hometown of Nazareth was close by.

The Gospels do say that Jesus left cities like Capernaum to visit neighboring towns and villages without naming these locations.

G. Freeman says Jesus may have visited Zippori, if his grandparents, St. Anne lived there. And Jesus may have gone to Zippori to pay taxes, since this was the capital of Galilee in the time of Jesus.

R. Ullian says that Zippori was a city requiring the services of many carpenters and builders, so both Jesus and St. Joseph may have visited there often or even worked there.

Herod Antipas decided to rebuild Zippori in 3 B.C., so this could have drawn the artisan St. Joseph and his family to settle in nearby Nazareth. Herod’s project would have provided work for many years. The landscapes and vistas around Zippori, unlike those of modern, urbanized Nazareth, may still resemble the countryside Jesus knew. Zippori got its name because it sits on a mountain top like a bird of “zip-por.”

Father Jerome Murphy-O’Conor describes the many sites at Zippori. The citadel is a mound dominated by a ruined church building with cornerstones that are rubble-filled Roman sarcophagi. The theater could seat 4,000 spectators. The theatre and central area of seating are cut into bedrock. The most natural explanation for Jesus’ use of the word “hypocrites” (meaning “stage actors”) in criticism of the religious leaders of his day is that he went to this theater, the nearest one to Nazareth.

The mansion south of the theater is a large building. In the center facing a colonnaded court was a dining room. It was covered by the columns on which the diners reclined. In the center is a magnificent mosaic depicting scenes from the life of Dionysos, the Greek god of revelry. Twelve of the 15 colorful scenes are intact. You see a drinking contest between Dionysos and Herakles, hunting scenes, a beautiful female face called the “Mona Lisa of the Galilee,” a procession with people carrying gifts or offerings to a shrine, and groups of birds and fish.

Also at Zippori is a 12th century church dedicated to St. Anne and St. Joachim, the parents of Mary. Only the three apses were completed and are now integrated into a modern monastery. There is another theory that, although the home of the Blessed Virgin Mary’s family was in Zippori, Mary herself was born in Jerusalem.

Father Richard Hare, pastor of St. Martin de Porres Parish, Syracuse, answered this week’s question.

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**Scripture Search**

Gospel for March 22, 2009

John 3:1-21

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the Fourth Sunday of Lent, Cycle B: Jesus explains the purpose for which he came. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

**Moses**

- So what man for God
- He gave
- Saved
- People
- Exposed

**Lenten Observances: Do something!**

So how are those Lenten observances coming along?

Have the pangs for chocolate subsided? Has your physical dependency on second helpings at the dinner table diminished? Did you forget and eat meat on Friday? How about the desire for hops and barley?

I’ve got to be honest. I’ve never done very well at keeping those kinds of Lenten observances. Skipping dessert while those around me are partaking in a slice of cake has always been a test of will. As for those hoppy, barley, well, it’s supposed to be a sacrifice — not torture — right?

It wasn’t until well into adulthood that I realized there were other avenues I could take during Lent without feeling like the most undisciplined Catholic in the diocese. Certainly, “giving something up for Lent” is an admirable endeavor, and I would never discourage anyone from choosing that form of discipline and sacrifice. I still try my best to do so.

But I’ve found that I am much better at trying to accomplish something, in other words, “doing something” in addition to “giving something up.”

What a blessing it is in South Bend to have the numerous opportunities we have on a regular basis to celebrate the Mass. Even the busiest of schedules allows for opportunities to receive Christ in the Mass, whether it is early in the morning, around the midday, or upon the conclusion of the nine-to-five workday. There is no greater Lenten observance than to attend Mass more frequently, not just the required Sunday obligation.

One of the most overlooked blessings in the Catholic Church is the opportunity to participate in the Stations of the Cross. I’m not sure most Catholics recognize what an unbelievable opportunity we have. I regret all the times through the years that I have bypassed the chance to commemorate and reflect upon Christ’s ultimate sacrifice for mankind.

It was suggested by Father Andre at St. Matthew’s Cathedral in South Bend to read one chapter per day of the Gospel of St. Luke during Lent. It is a mere 24 chapters, so if you read one chapter per day, or even skipped a few a day, you would easily finish prior to the conclusion of Lent. In fact, if you read one chapter per day of Mark and Luke, it adds up to 40, which is a nice, tidy number.

Sometimes the thought of reading the Bible intimidates or overwhelsms people. But it shouldn’t, particularly the New Testament. It is a clear and understandable read, and what better way to celebrate our Lord’s sacrifice than reflect upon his journey to Calvary.

If you read Today’s Catholic, you likely are no stranger to Lenten observances. Yet most Catholics don’t take advantage of the opportunity to open up a line of communication with God on a regular basis. Take a moment to reflect upon friends and family, and ask for God’s blessing upon them.

Hopefully, you don’t have too many enemies to pray for, yet Lent is a great time to reflect upon those you are at odds with. Praying for those who need your good thoughts and best wishes should be a regular observance. But that can be difficult. At least during Lent, add these people to your list.

Many of us live such busy lives that it’s difficult to squeeze in time for others. But Lent is the perfect time to volunteer to help those less fortunate. If you feel that you don’t have time to spare but have a few extra dollars, make Lent the time that you share your “wealth” with others, even if wealth for you is just a few extra dollars.

Trust me, I don’t have it all figured out. I want to be a more giving person, but of late, my thinking gets petty or even vindictive thoughts towards others. Pray to the Holy Spirit for the strength to be less self-involved and to put yourself in a random acts-of-kindness frame of mind. Let the car waiting in line slip ahead of you. Smile, make eye contact, and say thank you to the checkout person at the supermarket. Tell a friend how much you appreciate his impact on your life. And tell your spouse and loved ones, too. If you’re like me and have difficulty pushing that Snickers bar away, perhaps you can take an equally important approach. You don’t have to “give up something” to make it a beneficial and fruitful Lent. You simply have to share God’s love with others.

Tim Prister is a 1978 graduate of Marian High School and a 1982 graduate from the University of Notre Dame.

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**LENT CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20**

of better the divine heart. In our artistic tradition, there are general-ly two different approaches that try to depict the crucifixion of Christ. The one we see less frequently has the Lord on the cross before his heart is pierced with the lance. The more popular presentation shows his side after being pierced by the soldier’s spear. The latter reminds us of the Lord’s infinite openness — his love reaching out to men and women of every age. The former reminds us of the Lord’s love towards the individual heart as he offered himself (as well as ourselves) to the Father.

As one grows in intimacy with the Lord, appreciating that we are in his heart but also to the truth that he has attached himself to through baptism (there is a deeply personal meaning to the words “I will be with you all days”) we begin to grasp where true inner peace, contentment and joy is to be found. As one grows to appreciate the Father’s personalized and affectionate love toward the individual, one not only finds in this truth the roots of contentment — recognizing that he loves me even in and through my weakness — but also one grows into a deeper appreciation of the gifts that he has lavished upon us. And we become thankful.

In my own ministry, I have always found that helping others is a source of joy. Better, this should be self-qualifying. If you have found myself enriched by the realizing that they offer me the opportunity to encounter Christ in them, realizing that Christ has identified himself mystically with all who belong to him, especially the poor and hurting.

Tim Prister is a 1978 graduate of Marian High School and a 1982 graduate from the University of Notre Dame.
Being shallow now

Testimonies of celebrity Catholics prompt the question: What did we do wrong?

BY GREG ERANDSON

“Being Catholic Now” (Crown, $24.95), by Kerry Kennedy, is the kind of book that gives me a headache.

There is so much wrong about it, so many proud manifestations of ignorance, so much smug self- absorption on the part of Kennedy and the many “prominent Americans” she interviewed that it is a chore to make it through a single chapter, much less the entire book.

It is the kind of book that had me talking out loud, and writing notes in the margins. In CAPITAL LETTERS with exclamation points.

And yet I can recommend it as a sociological treasure, a verbal reflection of what went wrong with a generation, and perhaps a signpost to where we need to go in the future.

“Being Catholic Now” is a collection of personal testimonies from 37 Catholics. Almost all are white, middle-aged and middle or upper class. Most speak with conviction unencumbered by knowledge. They weigh in on all the many flaws of the church, starting with its priests and bishops. They obsess compulsively about the church’s “obsession” with sex and the many “prominent people” who “are willing to give it advice on what it can do to improve.”

Are there such remarkable people? Apparently not. Somehow, well, all these are from the church and millions of lives could be saved.”

Appropriately all those words come from the church about multiple sexual partners and marital chastity, and that whole “gynecological theology” thing have not done the trick, but millions of Africans are simply waiting for the word from Pope Benedict to shameful themselves.

It is a statement akin in thoughtfulness to “if the Vatican would only tell its treasures, we could eradicate poverty and disease,” actress Susan Sarandon’s helpful suggestion.

Not only Anna Quindlen coined the phrase “gynecological theology,” declaring that is where “the church is totally wrong.” If she were pope (a brain-wrenching image if ever there was one), she would make everything better by allowing birth control, ordaining women and approving in vitro fertilization. Call it Gynecological Theology, Take Two.

Talking head Bill O’Reilly, who likes to point out that he is Catholic by birth, now claims credit for getting Cardinal Bernard Law removed from office in Boston, criticizes homilies for being irrelevant, and points out that if everyone were as passionate as Jesus lived, life would be peachy, but “it’s the men (of the church) who implement the faith” that screwed it up.”

Journalist Cokie Roberts rebukes the church for not allowing their father, but, hey, that’s one of the things, and God really doesn’t mind if you’re committed to each other, if you are kind.

Threaded throughout these vestigial memories is an omnipresent brimstone. These folks got a lot of it.

The solution is not about rote memorization or more hellfire and brimstone. These folks got a lot of that.

Nor is the book about what we can do right in the future. It is about relating to the past and what we as a faith can learn and religious community.

And yet, despite the idiocies and blunders, the casual cruelties and the power trips of this silly beach.

One needs only to read Kennedy’s introduction, when she recounts personally asking Pope Benedict XVI to allow African Catholics to use condoms because, duh, “a word from the church and millions of lives could be saved.”

Comedian Bill Maher is now an atheist, but he did go to some Sunday school classes, and is now qualified to say that he hates religion: “It’s the worst thing in the world.”

Politician Nancy Pelosi’s statement that the church’s belief in free will is “very consistent with women having the right to choose” is a unique theological insight that is very convenient for her political choices.

Vestigial Catholics

There is something striking about the stories, taken cumulatively. First, what many of the respondents are doing is defining a vestigial Catholicism, similar to ethnic Judaism. The book could well be titled “Being Catholic Then.” Some of this is really just nostalgia for youthful memories, a kind of smells-and-bells Catholicism for people who have otherwise walked away from the majority of church teachings. As historian Douglas Brinkley writes, “I may be a lapse Catholic, but I have no desire to give up my Catholicism.”

Sarandon doesn’t really see herself as Catholic at all, but baptizes herself “because why not give them that?” She’s not married to her kids “because why not give up my Catholicism.”

Paraphrasing Gabriel Garcia Marquez, she recalls being raised by parents who were “not particularly religious,” but whose “energy was focused on social justice and activism.”

In Islam she discovered prayer, learning and religious community.

She likes “Islam’s sense of connection through generations.” She discovered, in short, a world that Catholicism itself inhabits, but which she was never fully introduced to.

An even younger Catholic, college student Allouisa May Thames, describes a priest on her campus who “avoids talking about God, and Jesus, like he’s stepping on eggers trying not to offend anyone.”

Kerry Kennedy and her ideological allies have a big question to answer: They claim still to be Catholic, drawing on childhood memories and then picking and choosing what fits into their current lifestyles. But what will they be passing on? Will their children be like Ingrid Mattson, deprived of the “fun” that the church offers, or will they be like Allouisa May Thames, rejecting this kind of thin soup and becoming the new generation of orthodox Catholics? Or will they sleep-walk in the faith as well?

To be fair to the book, there are a few other moving testimonies, particularly Martin Sheen’s honest description of his “reversion” to the faith and Peggy Noonan’s articulate recovery of an adult and vital faith in her 40s.

Overall, however, I was left reflecting on what we as a faith community have done wrong, and what we can do right in the future with regard to educating our own. The solution is not about rote memorization or more hellfire and brimstone. These folks got a lot of that.

What is needed is real intellectual engagement and real conversion of heart if the faith is to live and grow into adulthood.

Catholicism is about a relationship with the Christ who redeems us, not some sort of ethnic identity or familial inheritance. If such a relationship cannot be nurtured in mind, heart and soul, tomorrow’s men and women will simply not see what the big deal is about being Catholic now.

Greg Erandson is Our Sunday Visitor president and publisher. Reprinted with permission from Our Sunday Visitor, Huntington.
WHAT’S HAPPENING?

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

FISH FRIES

Jonah fish fry
South Bend — St. Matthew Cathedral will have a Jonah fish fry on Friday, March 27, from 4-7 p.m., in the school gym. Tickets are $6 for adults, $5 for seniors, $4 for children and children under 6 free. Carry-outs available.

St. Joseph plans fish fry and bake sale
Roanoke — St. Joseph Church will hold a fish fry and bake sale Friday, March 20, from 5-7:30 p.m. at the Roanoke American Legion, 1122 N. Main St. Adults $7, children under 12 $4. Baked goods and carry-out available.

Corpus Christi Jonah fish fry
South Bend — Corpus Christi Parish will have a Jonah fish fry and salad bar Friday, March 20, from 4-7:30 p.m. Adults $8, children 6-12 $3 and children 5 and under free.

Lenten Fish fry
South Bend — Sacred Heart of Jesus will have a Lenten fish fry by Tyner IOOF Friday, March 20, from 4-7 p.m. Adults and all carry-out drive-up tickets are $8. Children ages 6-12 are $3 and children ages 5 and under are free. Tickets available after each Mass or by calling (574) 291-3775.

Fish fry at Precious Blood
Fort Wayne — Most Precious Blood Parish, 1529 Barthold St., will have a fish fry Friday, March 20, from 4:30-7:30 p.m. Adults $8, children 6-12 $4 and children 5 and under $1. Carry-out available.

St. Adalbert plans fish fry
South Bend — St. Adalbert will have a fish fry Friday, March 20, from 3:30-7 p.m. in the Heritage Center. Adults and carry-out $7.50, children 5-12 $3 and children under 5 free.

MISC. HAPPENINGS

Benefit dinner hosts Lou Holtz
South Bend — The Women’s Care Center will host a benefit dinner and silent auction with speaker Lou Holtz on Tuesday, June 2, at 5:30 p.m. Tickets are $250. For reservations, call (260) 242-9377 or online at www.womenscarecenter.org. To donate an auction item, contact louandyou2009@aol.com or call (260) 452-3282.

Soup and the Stations
South Bend — The Corpus Christi Altar and Rosary Society will have a simple meal of soup and bread each Friday of Lent, followed by Stations of the Cross where children are invited to gather with Father Cam at the altar to pray each Station. Soup is served beginning at 6 p.m. in the Peterson Room. Stations follow at 7:30 in the church.

Spaghetti dinner for Lent
Fort Wayne — A Lenten spaghetti dinner sponsored by The Knights of Columbus Council 12417 will be held Friday, March 27, from 5-8 p.m. at Our Lady of Good Hope Church, 7215 St. Joe Rd., Shrimp and scallop pasta $6.50. Marinara pasta $4. Meal includes salad, bread, dessert and beverage. Proceeds support teens summer retreats.

Spaghetti dinner planned
Warsaw — The Knights of Columbus Council 4511 will host a spaghetti dinner Saturday, March 21. Adults $8, children ages 5-12 $4 and children under 5 free. Proceeds to support teens summer retreats. The council is located at 26 W. Bell Dr.

Vespers and choral concert
Shakamak — Queen of Peace Parish will offer sung Vespers Sunday, March 22, at 5 p.m. The University of Notre Dame Basilica Schola will lead the music and will present a brief Lenten choral concert following Vespers.

Palm weaving and brunch
Waterloo — St. Michael the Archangel Parish will have a palm weaving brunch in the parish hall on Sunday, March 29, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. A light brunch will be served. No reservations necessary. Create your bouquet of palms to bring to the Palm Sunday celebration.

Legion of Mary Acies
South Bend — The Legion of Mary will hold its Acies at Our Lady of Hungary Church, April 5 at 3 p.m. Active and auxiliary members are to attend. For information call (574) 259-6215 or (260) 483-0950.

Palm Sunday Acies
South Bend — St. Augustine Parish will present a panel discussion at St. Augustine about succeeding in school and life despite disabilities on Sunday, March 22, after the 10:30 a.m. Mass.

Perspectives, the Notre Dame Disabilities Awareness Club, will create awareness about and provide support for students with disabilities.

Square Dance time
Columbia City — St. Catherine Parish (located 10 miles south of Columbia City on State Road 9) will have a square dance on Saturday, March 28. Doors open at 6:30 p.m., dancing from 7-10 p.m. to music by Breakaway. Cost is $10 per person including snack and pop.

Soup and salad served
South Bend — The Ladies of the Knights of Columbus Council #553 will have a soup and salad lunch on Monday, March 30, from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 553 E. Washington St. Hungarian goulash will be served. A $5 donation is requested.

Rest in Peace

Bluffton
William A. Garvey, 82, St. Joseph
Decatur
Charles W. Mowery, 81, St. Mary of the Assumption
Elkhart
John E. Kiddier, Jr., 73, St. Thomas the Apostle
Fort Wayne
Richard N. Wyss, 81, St. Therese
Joseph W. Fitzgerald, 83, St. Charles Borromeo
William M. Lenard, 78, St. Charles Borromeo
Edward P. Moulin, 78, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
Karel M. Vandersnick, 46, Most Precious Blood

Mishawaka
Margaret C. Van De Putte, 100, St. Bavo
Linda D. Banner, 59, St. Bavo
Michael D. Madigan, 60, St. Monica
William M. Hauguel, 77, Queen of Peace
Sister M. Emmaratia, 50, Basilica Schola
Donald J. Metz, 59, Holy Family
Elaine A. Freedman, 85, Holy Family
James D. Metz, 59

North Dame
Brother Anthony E. Johnson, OSC, St. Joseph Chapel
South Bend
Kathryn Ewald, 81, Our Lady of Hungary
Louis J. Tatay, 90, St. Matthew Cathedral
Benedict J. Sopczynski, 93, St. Stanislaus
Russell W. Siders, 84, St. Stanislaus
Barbara J. Wolf, 68, Holy Cross
David M. Lacklusey, 37, Holy Cross
James D. Metz, 59, Holy Family
Martin J. Moorman, 85, St. Jude
Anna Turino Smith, 58, St. Joseph

Rummage Sales

Spring rummage sale
Kendallville — Immaculate Conception Parish will have a spring rummage sale Friday, March 27, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday, March 28, from 9-11:30 a.m. Bag sale after 3 p.m. on Friday and all day Saturday.

Garage sale
Fort Wayne — St. Vincent de Paul HASA will have a garage sale Friday, April 3, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Saturday, April 4, with a $3 bag sale from 8 a.m. to noon in the parish hall. Enter through door 10.

Mishawaka — The St. Monica Rosary Society will have a rummage sale Saturday, March 21, from 9 a.m. till noon in the church basement. There will be household items, toys, holiday decorations, books, etc.

Free Book about “The Passion”

You have seen the movie, now read what Jesus says about the meaning of His Passion as dictated to stigmatist, Catalina Rivas.

This 48-page book has the “Imprimatur” and is recommended for meditation. Mrs. Rivas was featured in the recent FOX-TV special, “Signs from God”, that was broadcast worldwide.

To receive this book, send your name and address with $2 for shipping & handling to:
Love & Mercy Publications
P.O. Box 1160
Hampstead, NC 28443
Bishop John M. D’Arcy was on hand to pay tribute to Father Walter Bly, who is retiring after 43 years of dedicated service. An icon at Saint Joseph’s High School, Father Bly was honored at Saturday’s 2009 Excellence Auction, “The Battle of Jericho: A Tribute to Father Walter Bly.” A record number of parents, teachers, alumni and religious were on hand as over 350 gathered at the Hilton Garden Inn at Saint Mary’s College.

**Cursillo enriches, develops adult Christian leaders**

**BY SISTER MARGIE LAVONIS, CSC**

SOUTH BEND — There are many movements in the church that serve to help Catholics in their quest to live good Christian lives: Marriage and Engaged Encounter, ChristRenews His Parish and Antioch are but to name a few. Another one of these movements is called Cursillo (pronounced kur-see-yo). Many other renewal movements are based on the structure and goals of Cursillo.

The Cursillo movement has its origins in Spain where a group of young men who conducted pilgrimages were seeking a way to deepen their spirituality, become better Christians, get closer to the Lord and to spread the Gospel. The fulfillment of their desire eventually grew into a Christian renewal movement that is active in many countries throughout the world.

The main goal or purpose of Cursillo is to help enrich and develop adult Christian leaders who strive to bring Christ into their daily lives, not by preaching at people, but by living the Gospel. Cursillo is Spanish for “short course” or “little.”

The weekend is sometimes called “a short course in Christianity.” It is an encounter with Christ, which begins on a Thursday evening at 7 p.m. and ends at 7 p.m. the following Sunday. Those who participate in a Cursillo weekend listen and reflect on talks presented by a team of laypersons, religious and clergy who have also made a weekend. There is sharing, prayer and participation in the Eucharist. It is a special time to share faith, come closer to Christ and build Christian community.

At baptism each Catholic received the call to participate in Christ’s mission to renew the world with God’s love. Cursillo supports adult Catholics in their efforts to live out this responsibility in the many environments where they live and work.

Cursillo doesn’t end on Sunday evening. One of the many blessings of Cursillo is becoming part of a supportive life-giving faith community that assists the members as they strive together to grow in their relationship with Christ and the church.

Deepening one’s faith is a life-time process. Those who make it are encouraged to become part of a small group that meets regularly to support one another in attempts to be good Christians and live Christ’s mission.

The next weekend for men in the diocese is March 26-29 and the women’s weekend will be April 23-26 at St. Patrick Parish in South Bend.

For more information contact Donna or Steve Sulentic at (574) 656-8261; Mary or Tim Weber at (574) 289-2269; or Melissa or Jeff Murawski at (574) 232-2529.

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**Continued from Page 1**

“The bishop called and told me of 40 names of refugees here. He said there are no Burmese-speaking priests here, and it would be nice if I could come and do ministry for them,” says Father Mahn Thapwa, adding, “It’s the first time I’ve experienced a bishop taking personal interest.”

According to Father Mahn Thapwa, there are currently no official sponsorship placements for the over 5,000 Burmese in other dioceses.

So following a concerted effort to enlist other priests to minister at his parish in Kansas, Father Mahn Thapwa was happy to get the bishop’s support, and went to Fort Wayne. To assist him on his sojourn to the Summit City, Father Mahn Thapwa enlisted longtime friend Father Sixtus Ye Myint, another of the 11 Burmese priests in the Diocese of Wichita.

Father Ye Myint was ordained in 1978 in Burma and has been in the U.S. since 2001, pastoring at St. Mary Parish in Moline.

The two arrived in Fort Wayne on March 12, and in addition to meeting with Bishop D’Arcy and Father Robert Schulte, vicar general of the diocese, to examine the list of registered Catholic Burmese and investigate ways to assist other Catholic Burmese, the two shepherds met privately with members of the Burmese population.

Faustina, Burmese outreach advocate for theYWCA and a resettled Burmese refugee herself, says of the priests’ visit, “The two shepherds came to worship as Catholic community; they (the Catholic Burmese) will continue to feel more comfortable in this spiritual home,” says Faustina.

The Burmese clerics offered the opportunity for the sacrament of reconciliation in Burma’s native tongue on Sunday, March 15, followed by a Burmese-language Mass.

Father Mahn Thapwa and Ye Myint conducted a Mass for a congregation of nearly 40 men, women and children, who had come to worship as Catholic community at MacDougal Chapel, where the awe and reverence were palpable.

During the homily, which was spoken in the Burmese language as well as in English, Father Mahn Thapwa encouraged the devout audience to “be patient and the time will come when you will be blessed with the sacraments of marriage and baptism here,” assuring them that their concerns had been heard.

Julie, a Burmese native currently living in Fort Wayne, says the sermon was an encouragement to support her people.

“He told us to be honest and hard working,” Julie says. “That is good especially for the Burmese who are coming for the first time.”

It is the recipe, she says, for a better life and a brighter future.

Bishop D’Arcy was pleased to have the assistance of these priests and says, “As pastor of the diocese, the bishop has the responsibility to give pastoral care to everyone. Catholics are only 1 percent of the population in Burma, but we are finding they are very devout in their faith, and it is my obligation as bishop to find priests who can preach to them, hear their confessions and offer Mass in their own language. Through the Burmese, we found two such priests serving in Kansas, who drove all the way to spend the weekend with them and give them pastoral care. This brought the Burmese Catholics great joy, and also several other Catholic people who have been working with them.”

Father Mahn Thapwa says of his trip to Fort Wayne, “I think with the way the bishop and pastors are so open and helpful, the Burmese are at home in this spiritual home.”

He adds, “The language is a barrier, but the caring is already apparent. Our role is to tear the barrier down and assure them of the love and care the diocese has for them.

The priests would like to return as time permits to support this community, and perhaps, they say, to offer the sacraments as well as facilitate retreats and encourage active participation in the Catholic Church. “Hopefully, they (the Catholic Burmese) will continue to feel more comfortable in this spiritual home,” says Father Mahn Thapwa.

Following the Mass the Burmese community, along with the two visiting priests attended a luncheon at the Archbishop Noll Catholic Center hosted by Bishop D’Arcy and the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.