**NOTRE DAME’S EUCHARISTIC PROCESSION**

Kneeling in prayer at the second altar during Sunday’s fifth annual Eucharistic Procession at the University of Notre Dame, Mary’s intercession was sought for a number of petitions. Students and area families prayed “that through the Sacred Heart of Jesus, our government officials may recognize the dignity of human life from conception until natural death.” They also prayed “for the Notre Dame community, may they continue to be strengthened by the prayers of Our Lady, who is our sweetness, and our hope.” Over 200 people participate in this year’s procession, which began down the main aisle of the Sacred Heart Basilica following Mass and continued outside with a prayerful walk through campus and stops at four altars. The procession ended at the steps of foot of the Golden Dome, with prayers and benediction.

**Glendon declines Notre Dame’s Laetare Medal**

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Citing concerns about plans to honor President Barack Obama despite his views on “fundamental principles of justice” that are contrary to Catholic teaching, former U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican Mary Ann Glendon has turned down the prestigious Laetare Medal from the University of Notre Dame.

In an April 27 letter to Holy Cross Father John I. Jenkins, Notre Dame’s president, Glendon said she will not participate in May 17 commencement exercises during which the award was to have been presented.

The letter, posted on the blog of the magazine First Things, does not mention specific justice principles, but Glendon was critical of Notre Dame’s decision to give Obama an honorary degree.

Obama supports legal abortion and his administration recently proposed new regulations that would allow the use of federal funds for embryonic stem-cell research. Both are in direct conflict with fundamental church teaching.

The Laetare Medal is presented annually to an American Catholic layperson for outstanding service to the Catholic Church and society.

A spokeswoman for the Indiana university confirmed April 27 that Glendon, who served as ambassador from 2007 until earlier this year, was the first person to accept and then later decline the award.

Father Jenkins offered a two-sentence response on the university’s Web site.

“We are, of course, disappointed, that...
Confirmations and Luers’ fund-raiser complete a busy week

BISHOP JOHN M. D’ARCY

The moment of the week

It had to be the speech given by Megan Ryan at Luers Knight. Megan will graduate in a few days, magna cum laude, from Saint Mary’s College; but she was at the annual Luers Knight this past Friday. This was the last of the four fund-raisers for the high schools. My part in each school is something called the Bishop’s Auction. All the money given goes to grants for students who, otherwise, could not attend our schools. We know from experience that when there is a downturn in the economy, our schools can lose students; and we are working hard to see that does not happen this year. Megan, who graduated from Luers four years ago, gave a beautiful reflection of what Bishop Luers meant to her. She is president of the alumni group at Saint Mary’s College, an outstanding scholar and involved with many activities. But this was not enough. She was always one to help the handicapped student, the one who has trouble reading or writing, or is disabled in some way. Working with another student at Saint Mary’s, they have put together the structure of a program, which will bring the two of them to Ghana where they will work with children with disabilities.

Megan traced this unselfishness to her four years at Bishop Luers, along with her parents. She spoke about the spiritual resources she found at Luers, the excellent academic experience, the famed Luers spirit; and she held all of us in the palm of her hand with a beautiful reflection tinged with the kind of emotion that touched the hearts of all who were present.

Then I got up and led the auction, and we raised $104,000. Bishop Luers is not in a high-economic area by any means, and I have no doubt in my mind that it was Megan Ryan’s moving reflection on what Bishop Luers High School meant to her that brought about this wonderful result.

Seventy-eight percent of those who go to Luers receive some financial aid, and this year it was over $225,000.

Yes, like our other three high schools, has been recently ranked an exemplary school, and it was a joy to help them in their fund-raising this past Friday night.

Lots of variety

On Tuesday night, I celebrated the sacrament of confirmation in the beloved old St. Joseph’s Church, Mishawaka. All three Mishawaka parishes came together — St. Bavo, St. Monica and Saint Joseph — and the church was full. It was a real Mishawaka evening, because a supper of soup and sandwich in the St. Joseph’s rectory was provided by Maury Coquot — of the famed Maury’s Pub in Mishawaka. I always enjoy being with my priests, and it was a delight to talk with Fathers Terry Fisher, Barry England and Jeff Largent. Mishawaka is a working-class town and there is great pride in each of the parishes; and we expect to do much planning there in the future, both for the parishes and the three excellent schools.

But what a change the next night. I drove across the diocese the next day to Sacred Heart Parish, Fort Wayne, to the Mother Theodore Guérin Community under the pastoral care of Father George Gabet, FSSP. Father George, a native of this diocese, whom I had the privilege of ordaining in the Latin rite 10 years ago; the very same service in which I, myself, was ordained 52 years ago.

I conferred the sacrament of confirmation under the same rite in which I was confirmed as a young boy in Presentation Parish, Brighton, by the unforgettable Cardinal Richard Cushing. There were 25 confirmed, some of them having come all the way from South Bend. I was most impressed with the careful catechesis that Father George had done with these young people. He has forged a strong community in Sacred Heart Parish, Fort Wayne, and also in St. Patrick, South Bend.

Many of the children are home-schooled.

Franciscans reflect on relevance of charism 800 years after founding

ASSISI, Italy (CNS) — Brown-, gray- and black-robed robes rustled, knotted white cords swung rhythmically, and sandaled feet crunched gravel.

The soft sounds of labored breathing could also be heard as several hundred Franciscan friars from all over the world wound their way up steep hills, passing wheat fields and olive groves while on a two-hour penitential procession to the tomb of their founder, St. Francis of Assisi.

The processing friars were just some of the 1,800 Friars Minor, Conventual Franciscans, Capuchins and Third Order Regular Franciscans attending an April 15-18 gathering celebrating the 800th anniversary of papal approval of the Franciscan rule. It was the first time that many representatives of the four main Franciscan branches had come together in Assisi.

Participants followed in the footsteps of their founder with many activities centered around or near the Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels, which houses the Portiuncula chapel — the small church where St. Francis experienced his conversion.

On April 18, participants traveled south for a special audience with Pope Benedict XVI. The trip recalled St. Francis’ pilgrimage to see Pope Innocent III in 1209 to receive approval of his rule of life and formally establish the Franciscan order.

Meeting with them in the courtyard of the papal villa in Castel Gandolfo, south of Rome, the pope thanked the world’s Franciscan family for being “a precious gift” to all Christians.

The pope recalled how St. Francis heard
Father Dombrowski became the deanery director of CYO and CYA in South Bend in June of 1964 and in that same month was appointed associate pastor of St. Matthew Cathedral in South Bend. His pastoral ministry in the diocese was always received with love and gratitude.

One year later, Father Dombrowski was released from his diocesan pastorate for duty in the Chaplains’ Corps of the U.S. Army in 1965. After serving with distinction as chaplain in the Army for 20 years, he returned to the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend in 1985. It was then that he was retired from the Army chaplaincy.

Following his return to the area, he was assigned as pastor of St. Mary of the Assumption Church by Bishop John M. D’Arcy, where he served the Catholics of Decatur for 10 years. The community included a school and a community hospital. Father Dombrowski

FATHER ROBERT DOMBRowski

Franciscan friars participate in a two-hour penitential procession from the Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels to the tomb of St. Francis in Assisi, Italy, April 17.

God’s voice telling him, “Repair my house,” and he urged today’s Franciscans to continue those efforts of fixing the serious “ruins” in society and mankind.

“Like Francis, always begin with yourself. We are the first homes that God wants restored,” Pope Benedict said. In the spirit of the Gospel, “continue to help the pastors of the church by rendering her face as the bride of Christ more beautiful.”

During an outdoor eucharistic celebration in Assisi April 17, Brazilian Cardinal Claudio Hummes, a Franciscan who heads the Vatican’s Congregation for Clergy, underscored the importance of the Franciscan charism of fraternity, communion and living the evangelical ideal of poverty.

“To live evangelical poverty in a world that is increasingly dazzled and enslaved by money and to live with love and solidarity toward the poor — toward every single poor person — must be one of the most important and significant contributions the Franciscan friars make” in bearing witness to Christ in today’s world, Cardinal Hummes said in his homily.

Cardinal Frane Rode, prefect of the Vatican’s Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, echoed the importance of living a humble and poor life of poverty and simplicty does not mean that cable television, Internet and BlackBerry electronic organizers get the boot, rather the friars said they all find a way to maintain a proper balance between a simple, spiritual life that is still part of a busy, high-tech culture.

Local celebrations took place at St. Paul of the Cross in Columbia City and at the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration in Mishawaka.

LAETARE

Continued from Page 1

Professor Glendon has made this decision,” his statement said. “It is our intention to award the Laetare Medal to another deserving recipient, and we will make the announcement as soon as possible.”

Glendon, professor of law at Harvard Law School, wrote that the Notre Dame’s decision to honor the president disregards a 2004 request from the U.S. bishops to Catholic institutions and organizations asking them “not to honor those who act in defiance of our fundamental moral principles.”

“The former ambassador said she felt the bishops’ request is “reasonable” and does not seek to “control or interfere with an institution’s freedom to invite speakers and engage in serious debate with whomever it wishes.” As a result, she wrote, “I am at a loss to understand why a Catholic university should disrespect it.”

Glendon said she was also concerned that the university had issued “talking points” that implied that her acceptance speech for the award would “somehow balance the event.”

She quoted two statements from the university:

• “President Obama won’t be doing all the talking, Mary Ann Glendon, the former U.S. ambassador to the Vatican, will be speaking as the recipient of the Laetare Medal.”

“• We think having the president come to Notre Dame, see our graduates, meet our leaders and hear a talk from Mary Ann Glendon is a good thing for the president and for the causes we care about.”

Glendon wrote that a commencement is supposed to be a joyous day for the graduates and their families.

“It is not the right place, nor is a brief acceptance speech the right vehicle, for engagement with the very serious problems raised by Notre Dame’s decision — in disregard of the settled position of the U.S. bishops to honor a prominent and uncompromising opponent of the church’s position on issues involving fundamental principles of justice,” the letter said.

In light of reports that other Catholic institutions also are choosing to disregard the bishops’ request, Glendon expressed concern that Notre Dame’s example “could have an unfortunate ripple effect.”

Glendon concluded her letter by saying that she would release it to the media without making any other comment “at this time.”

The university has been under nearly constant criticism since announcing March 20 that Obama would speak at the commencement. Bishops, clergy, alumni and conservative Catholic organizations have mounted a campaign seeking to have the university revoke the invitation to the president. However, students have been reported to be enthusiastic about and supportive of the president’s upcoming appearance on campus.

The Laetare Medal has been awarded by the university since 1883 and is the university’s oldest and most prestigious award for lay Catholics. Past recipients include President John F. Kennedy, Sen. Daniel P. Moynihan, death penalty abolitionist Sister Helen Prejean, a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Medaille; and Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement. Last year’s recipient was actor and political activist Martin Sheen.
Parish Mission
St. Mary of the Annunciation • Bristol, Indiana
May 2-6, 2009
Presented by Father Angelus M. Shaughnessy
Order of Friars Minor Capuchin

MASSES CELEBRATED:
Saturday, May 2 - 4:30 pm, Sunday, May 3 - 8:30 & 11:00 am, Wed., May 6 - 7:00 pm
Presentations by Father Shaughnessy May 3, 4, 5, at 7:00 pm
(Reservation following Wednesday evening Mass)

CONFESSIONS...
Before and after each evening presentation (except Wednesday)
Before and after 9:00 am daily Mass and May 4, 5, 6 at 3:00 pm

Father Angelus has devoted his life to delivering God's message of joy, hope and a promise of everlasting life. A message and teaching the fundamentals of Christianity through his missionary work in Papua, New Guinea and throughout the Unites States. Matthew Edmund Shaughnessy, was born on November 16, 1929 in Rochester, Pa. He was baptized on November 24, 1929 at St. Cecelia’s Church in Rochester. For eight years he attended school there under the guidance of the Sisters of Divine Providence and graduated in 1943. Upon graduation, he entered St. Fidelis College and Seminary in Herman, Pa. which was staffed by the Capuchin-Franciscan Friars of the St. Augustine Province where he earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Liberal Arts. A talented and capable athlete in his youth, Father Angelus turned down an offer to play professional baseball as a left-hand- ed pitcher for the Cleveland Indians to enter the Capuchin Novitiate in Cumberland, Maryland. On July 14, 1953, Father solemnly professed his perpetual vows as a Capuchin Friar. Father’s theological studies took him to the crypt of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. From 1956 until 1966, Father Angelus served as the Director of Secular Franciscan Order (S.F.O.) at St. Augustine Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Father Angelus volunteered to work as a missionary in Papua New Guinea (PNG) where he was spiritual director and teacher in the Pontifical Seminary of Madang for eleven years. As a major part of his parochial ministry, Father was again received well by all. Ann Marie Monhait, who worked for over three years as the DRE for Father Dombrowski said, “He was a wonderful confessor. He was very loving and compassionate. He was full of joy!” Services for Father Dombrowski included visitation at the Little Portion Monastery, in Eureka Ark., on April 26. A Mass of Christian Burial was offered by Bishop Anthony Taylor of the Diocese of Little Rock on April 27 at St. Elizabeth Catholic Church Hall, in Eureka. Father Dombrowski was buried at the monastery. Bishop John M. D’Arcy will hold a memorial Mass at St. Mary in Decatur in the near future for those who were unable to attend the funeral in Arkansas.

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The future of our parishes

By Bishop John M. D'Arcy

O ne of the central responsibilities of a bishop is to see that the Eucharist is provided for his people. In support of this responsibility and of other matters central to the life of the church, he must seek to provide sufficient priests for the people of his diocese, which the Lord through the church has placed in his hands. As part of this responsibility the bishop, along with others — especially his priests, must seek to find and implement ways to draw young men to consider the priesthood and not be afraid to offer themselves to this beautiful, but demanding vocation. Working with others, he must try to forge a spirit of courage among young people so they will be willing to take this path of love and service in response to the love of Christ.

Recent circumstances have made it necessary and opportune to seek priests from other countries who may be able to assist on either a temporary or permanent basis, so each parish may have the presence of priests to care for the flock in the name of Christ.

Such efforts, because of the prayers of many and the grace of the providential God, who promised always to be with his church, have proven to be effective. Thus, in the last 23 years, 20 young men have been ordained to the priesthood and continue to serve in parishes, and also six priests who have come from other countries have been incardinated into the diocese, meaning that they have promised to be part of the priestly work of this diocese throughout their lives. Approximately 100 others from overseas have spent a period of time serving here.

Also, at this writing, 14 young men are in the seminary preparing for the priesthood of this diocese. Two more have been accepted for the seminary for next year, and several more are in the application process.

The present pastoral situation causes another question to arise:

Are priests presently distributed, or placed, in such a way that people are being properly served, and is the joyful work of pastoral care properly assigned so that no priest’s responsibility becomes excessive?

A quick glance at the statistics in the diocese certainly raises pastoral concerns about both of these questions.

There are parishes where the average number of baptisms per year for the past five years is five or less, and these parishes have one priest. There are other parishes where the average number of baptisms per year for the past five years is 80. These parishes also have one priest. There are parishes where there are over 200 baptisms a year, and these parishes have just two priests.

Baptisms

Baptisms are a significant factor in weighing the situation. Baptisms require much work of preparation, instruction of parents, follow-up religious instruction, the eventual preparation for first holy Communion and confirmation. When there are a significant number of baptisms, there must be the training of catechists, teachers who will instruct both parents and children. The priest, who is the chief catechist in the parish, cannot be distant from this work; but must be in the midst of it, tending the flock and training others to teach.

The sacrament of marriage

The bishop and his advisors must also watch closely the number of marriages in a parish. This sacrament requires great discernment and preparation both remote and approximate. While the diocese plays its role through the family life office, preparation for marriage is a significant parish responsibility. The responsibility has grown in complexity, because there are many movements in the contemporary culture — such as same-sex marriage, widespread contraception, couples living together before marriage and lack of respect for life — which affect young people. The priest must be able to clarify and present clearly to the young couple a sound teaching, so that they will follow the teaching of the church, and cherish it, and pass it on to their children.

He must choose and train married couples to help him. There are parishes that have two or three marriages a year, and other parishes that have 60 or 70 marriages per year. In both cases, there is one priest.

It would be a superficial pastoral analysis if this matter is considered only on the basis of the distribution of work. The full flowering of the spiritual life of families depends on proper distribution of priests. (Indeed, proper preparation of people for marriage will affect family life for several generations.)

There are two additional reasons why it is necessary to face distribution of priests in the difficult pastoral situation at this time.

1. The coming of a new bishop. I have been bishop here for 24 years, and treasure every day while I hold this great responsibility. It is incumbent upon me, especially given my knowledge of the diocese, to face what must be done, by at least initiating those changes that need to be made for the better pastoral care of our people, and not leave such difficult decisions to the new bishop. The adjustment faced by a new bishop is difficult without having to address the merging or closing of parishes.

2. There is a second reason for facing the necessity of parish mergers at this time. Of our 80 parishes, 11 are currently under the pastoral care of priests from other countries who are not incardinated in this diocese. Incardination is a term in canon law, meaning that a priest is linked permanently to the pastoral service of a diocese. Since these priests are not permanently bound here, they can return to their home diocese or their religious congregation, if they so choose. This presents a second reason why planning and decision making cannot be postponed.

In fairness to the next bishop, in order to make choices rooted in my 24 years of experience, keeping in mind the number of priests serving here but not committed to a life of pastoral service among us, after consultation with priests, and in preparation for further consultation among the laity, I now present to the faithful of the diocese the decisions, which I have made relative to the future of our parishes, and also the changes that must be made in both the near and more distant future.

I have made these decisions after extensive consultation with our priests. Over a year ago, I formed a committee of priests who met several times over many months, and presented to me a plan for merging and joining parishes, so that our priests might be better served.

Wiseely, they suggested that not all of these should be made at once, but should be presented, so that there could be further consultation and prayer.

However, some of these changes need not be made at this time.

• There will be a consultation in each parish, presided over by the vicar forane, or dean of the area, where the parish is located.

Some history

There were 89 parishes when I was installed as bishop. One new parish, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, has been established, bringing the number to 90 at the highest point. Over 24 years, 10 have been merged or suspended, leaving 80 parishes in the diocese at this time.

St. Mary, Geneva

Founded in 1883, this parish has 82 families, and it has had 19 baptisms, and no marriages over the five years of our study. I know it well, and have been there many times. As with all the parishes under consideration, it is precious to those who live there, and who are members of this parish.

St. Mary, Geneva, has one candidate from that parish studying for the priesthood. Over the five-year period from 2003 through 2007, there was an average of 4.5 baptisms per year.

Recommendation of Priests’ Committee: That it be joined to the nearest parish in the diocese, which is St. Mary, Decatur. This recommendation has been accepted and further discussion.

However, the parish will remain with a resident priest, as long as Father Bosco Perera, OMI, a native of Sri Lanka, is able to remain with us. After that, it will be joined to St. Mary Parish, Decatur. Because of its many years, efforts will be made to see that Mass is celebrated there at least once a month. A special difficulty is that St. Mary’s nearest parish in the diocese is 26 miles to the north.

St. Catherine, Nix Settlement

This parish was founded in 1850, prior to the establishment of the Fort Wayne Diocese. In recent decades it has been cared for by the pastor of St. Joseph Parish, Roanoke. In the five years under consideration, this parish had 14 baptisms — an average of 2.4 per year, and one marriage.

Recommendation: That this parish be taken care of by the pastor of St. Paul of the Cross Parish, Columbia City, which is closer, and should remain a site for one Mass each Sunday by the pastor of Columbia City.

St. Francis Xavier, Piocketon

Founded in 1864, this parish has for many years been under the pastoral care of a part-time priest. In recent years, there has been the judicial vicar, whose full-time ministry is the direction of the diocesan tribunal. In the past five years, there have been 17 baptisms, an average of 4.1 per year. There have been four marriages, which is less than one per year.

Recommendation: It is recommended that this parish be merged with the Sacred Heart Parish, Warsaw — where there is a school and a church — and where both church and school have recently been enlarged.

St. Joseph, Roanoke, and in Huntington, St. Peter and Paul and St. Mary

The two Huntington parishes are historic. St. Mary’s founded in 1896, had as its pastor the legendary Archbishop Noll. Our Sunday Visitor began during his pastorate, and Huntington was at the location of OSV, the largest Catholic publishing company in the country. Sts. Peter and Paul established in 1843 has been under the pastoral care of Capuchin Franciscan priests in recent decades. However, there is no assurance that they will replace Father Ronald Rieder, OFM, Cap, when he retires, and they have indicated that they probably will not. These two parish churches are a few steps away, almost literally across the street from each other. These two parishes along with St. Joseph, Roanoke, require special pas-
FUTURE
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

tor analysis. St. Mary’s had an average of 31.2 baptisms per year. Ss. Peter and Paul’s average of 42.3 baptisms over the five-year period under examination. St. Mary’s had 56 marriages — or 11.1 per year, and Ss. Peter and Paul averaged 10.2 marriages per year.

St. Joseph, Roanoke, established in 1867, is several miles from the two Huntington churches. Roanoke had 19 baptisms in the five-year period, an average of 3.4 per year. There were four marriages during that time, less than one per year.

St. Mary, Fort Wayne
The grand history of this parish is well-known. Established in 1848, nine years before the establishment of the Diocese of Fort Wayne, this parish has won the respect of the wider community in recent decades for its ministry to those in need, especially the Soup Kitchen, the granting of scholarships to Catholic Schools for African-American children and others, the foundation of the Matthew 25 Clinic for those without health insurance and Vincent Village for homeless families.

Recommendation: That it be joined to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, which is only two blocks away. Also, it is recommended that there continue to be a Mass each Sunday at St. Mary’s, which indeed, is the present situation at that parish.

Presently, St. Mary’s is under the pastor of St. Peter Church.

Response: Because of the close distance of St. Mary’s and the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, this recommendation has been accepted, pending further consultation with the parish and the Presbyteral Council.

St. Henry, Fort Wayne
For the five years under consideration, St. Henry Parish has had 11 baptisms, an average of 2.1 per year.

For many years, the pastor of St. Henry Parish has also been pastor of the nearby Sacred Heart Parish.

Recommendation: Let the pastor of St. Peter Parish in Fort Wayne also have responsibility for St. Henry Parish.

Response: This recommendation is accepted pending further consultation with the pastor in question, and the faithful, and also the Presbyteral Council.

Sacred Heart Parish, Fort Wayne
During the five-year period under discussion, there have been 26 baptisms at Sacred Heart, an average of 5.1 per year.

For many years, the Latin Mass, now referred to as the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Liturgy, has been celebrated at this parish. Thus, this parish now houses the St. Mother Theodore Guerin Community, directed by Father George Gabet, FSSP.

Recommendation: That this parish be granted to the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter, of which Father Gabet, FSSP, is a member, and that they follow the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Liturgy.

I have spoken about this with Father Gabet, FSSP, and I am certainly open to this possibility. Mass in the extraordinary form is now celebrated daily, as well as Sunday, at Sacred Heart Parish.

Response: I have accepted this recommendation, pending further consultation with the parish and the Fraternity of St. Peter.

St. Joseph, Garrett
Recommendation: Merge St. Joseph, Garrett, with Immaculate Conception, Auburn, under one priest. At least one weekly Mass would be mandated at St. Joseph, Garrett.

Many children from Immaculate Conception, Auburn, already are enrolled at St. Joseph School, Garrett.

Response: This recommendation is not accepted at this time, but may need to be considered later. Recent efforts to strengthen St. Joseph, Garrett, especially from a fiscal point of view, have been successful.

St. Rose, Monroeville
Established in 1868, this parish has 76 baptisms over a five-year period, an average of 15.1 per year. For many years, St. Rose, Monroeville, and St. Louis, Besancon, have been under the care of one pastor.

Recommendation: That this parish be under the care of the pastor of St. Joseph-Hessen Cassel.

Response: While such a recommendation will be considered, this does not release an extra priest for service in a larger parish. Another possibility remains; namely, keeping the parish in Besancon and the parish in Monroeville under one pastor.

Consolidation of the Monroeville school with St. Joseph-Hessen Cassel, or with the parish school at Besancon, which to some extent has taken place — will continue to be evaluated.

St. Mary of the Assumption, Avilla
St. Mary of the Assumption, Avilla, established in 1853, is one of the oldest parishes in the diocese. It includes an excellent school of 168 students, and at one time was the only parish between Fort Wayne and Elkhart. It is blessed, also, with the Franciscan Sisters of Frankfort, Ill. St. Mary’s, Avilla, averages 15 baptisms and eight marriages per year. Immaculate Conception averages 12 baptisms and two to three marriages per year.

Recommendation: That these parishes be merged, with the priests residing at Avilla, and offering one or two Masses a week at Immaculate Conception, Kendallville.

Response: This recommendation is placed on hold for now. When we are no longer able to keep a priest in each parish, this recommendation will have to be seriously considered.

St. Louis, Besancon
This parish had 67 baptisms in the five-year period, an average of 13.2 per year, and 29 marriages — an average of 5.4 per year. St. Louis, Besancon, was established in 1846, and has had a strong school for a long time.

Recommendation: That the parish be merged with St. John’s, New Haven, which is three miles distant.

Response: At present, we are able to have a priest at this parish. This recommendation is put on hold for now, but will need serious consideration in the years ahead. If it is merged with St. John’s, New Haven, Mass should be continued to be celebrated at St. Louis, Besancon, at least once a month.

Immaculate Conception, Kendallville, and St. Mary of the Assumption, Avilla
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South Bend area
St. John the Baptist

Established in 1921, this parish has been the spiritual home for many, including immigrants from Hungary. It has a school, which has been especially helpful to the children of low-income families.

Response: This recommendation is accepted pending further consultation with the parishes and the Presbyteral Council.

Recommendation: That Our Lady of Hungary Parish be administered by St. Matthew Cathedral Parish. Thus, the pastor and priests at St. Matthew’s would care for both St. Matthew’s and Our Lady of Hungary Parish.

Our Lady of Hungary Parish, South Bend

Established in 1921, this parish has had 73 baptisms over the five-year period, an average of 14.5 per year. There have been 14 marriages — an average of 2.4 per year.

Recommendations:
- Consideration should be given to merging St. John the Baptist, South Bend, with Corpus Christi Parish, South Bend, or Holy Cross Parish, South Bend.
- It is recommended that this not be an immediate action, because a decision should be made as to whether or not the school should be merged with another school.

Response: This will be considered after further consultation with the parish, the Presbyteral Council, and the diocesan Schools Office.

St. Hedwig, St. Patrick and St. Casimir, South Bend

Recommendation: That St. Casimir Parish be closed, and overflow activities from St. Adalbert’s be handled by St. Hedwig Parish. The priests at St. Adalbert’s should be asked to administer St. Adalbert and St. Hedwig with the closing of St. Casimir.

Response: This would have to be discussed with the Congregation of Holy Cross; who have staffed St. Casimir’s for many years and St. Adalbert’s more recently.

St. Casimir’s recently made some painful choices to reduce their budget, and it remains a spirited parish.

The present situation, with St. Patrick’s and St. Hedwig’s administered by one pastor, seems better at this time; because of the close proximity of the two churches. Both churches have been recently restored and are greatly cherished.

St. Patrick, Walkerton

Founded in 1856, this parish had 62 baptisms over the five-year period, with an average of 12.2 per year. There were 16 marriages — an average of 3.1 per year.

Recommendation: Because of its geographic location and its isolation from any nearby Catholic churches in our diocese, St. Patrick, Walkerton, would remain a parish, but consideration should be given to building a larger church, which would allow pastors to offer less than the present three Masses each Sunday, along with one on Saturday for the parish community.

Response: This recommendation has been accepted, and the pastor and parish will be encouraged to consider the building of a new parish church.

St. John’s, Mishawaka

There are three parishes in downtown Mishawaka: St. Monica, St. Joseph and St. Bavo. All parishes are of similar size.

Recommendation: It may be possible in the future to assign two priests with pastoral care for all three parishes. This could be a pastoral team, or it could be a pastor and associate.

Fort Wayne area
St. John Bosco, Churubusco, and Immaculate Conception, Ege

Some years ago, after consultation with the pastor and parishioners of St. Vincent Parish, the diocese purchased extensive land in Huntertown, with the possibility of a new parish and school there. There had been two surveys of parishioners at St. Vincent’s, one conducted informally by the parish, and another conducted about 10 years ago by an outside firm. St. Vincent’s has 768 baptisms over the five-year period — an average of 153 per year, and an average of 63 marriages per year.

Recommendation: That if a new parish is established in Huntertown, St. John Bosco, Churubusco, and Immaculate Conception, Ege, should be merged into the new parish.

Response: A new parish, if possible with a school, should be considered with a church built on the land in Huntertown, which is adjacent to Cedar Canyon Road.

However, the present economic climate indicates that this consideration should now begin, the fund raising for a new church should wait until the economy is stabilized.

Also, we must consider the effect on parish schools to the north, such as Garrett and Avilla.

Immaculate Conception, Ege, should continue to have a Mass at least once a month in light of its long history and unique location.

Concluding comments

These changes would release four, and possibly five, diocesan priests for other assignments, either as pastors or associate pastors. It would ease the necessity of appointing as pastors, priests who were ordained only a few years.

It would also release four or five of the non-incardinated priests for other parishes, if their superiors allow them to remain.

I remain grateful for all who have helped consider these important refinements to our pastoral life. It is imperative that these considerations for the proper pastoral care of our diocese move ahead shortly. Some should move towards implementation in the near future, others within a few years.
Pope creates five saints, says they hold lessons for economic crisis

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI canonized five new saints and said their dedication to the Eucharist, the poor and the world of work made them models for today's Christians in an era of economic crisis. By orienting their lives to Christ, the five men and women showed that “it is possible to lay the foundations for construction of a society open to justice and solidarity, overcoming that economic and cultural imbalance that continues to exist in a great part of our planet,” the pope said.

The pope celebrated the canonization Mass in St. Peter’s Square April 26, joined by tens of thousands of pilgrims who held up photos or drawings of the saints. Four of the new saints were Italian and one was Portuguese. Dressed in bright gold vestments, the 82-year-old pontiff listened as biographies of the five were read aloud, and then pronounced the canonization formula, drawing applause from the crowd. Afterward, relics of the new saints were brought to the altar. In his homily, the pope said the saints’ lives hold valuable lessons for modern Christians. Each of the newly canonized had a special devotion to the Eucharist, and each transformed that spiritual power into social action, he said.

FDA decision on Plan B for minors called contrary to common sense

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The Food and Drug Administration's decision not to appeal a court decision that the morning-after pill marketed as Plan B should be available over the counter should be available over the counter to minors “flies in the face of common sense,” said the U.S. bishops’ pro-life spokesperson.

Access to Plan B could endanger the lives of newly conceived children, and will put minors at risk for unnecessary side effects, undermine parental rights and for unnecessary side effects, undermine parental rights and contribute to higher” rates of sexually transmitted diseases, said Deirdre McQuade, assistant director for policy and communications at the bishops’ Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, in an April 23 statement. The FDA announced April 22 that the Obama administration would not appeal a March 23 decision by U.S. District Judge Edward Korman making Plan B available to 17-year-olds without a prescription. A prescription had previously been required for anyone under 18. Korman, a judge in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York, said the FDA had “repeatedly and unreasonably” delayed a decision on whether Plan B should be available over the counter and had been swayed by politics in ultimately deciding to make the drug available without a prescription only to those 18 or over.

Cardinal urges House members to co-sponsor Pregnant Women Support Act

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Whatever their position on abortion, any House members who agree that “no woman should ever have to undergo an abortion because she feels she has no choice” or alternatives should co-sponsor the Pregnant Women Support Act, said Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia.

The legislation, introduced by Rep. Lincoln Davis, D-Tenn., “provides an authentic common ground, an approach that people can embrace regardless of their position on other issues,” said the cardinal, chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities, in an April 24 letter to House members. “An abortion performed under ... social and economic duress meets no one’s standard for ‘freedom of choice,’” he added.

The bill provides “many kinds of life-affirming support for pregnant women and their unborn children,” Cardinal Rigali said, adding that it “reaches out to women with a helping hand when they are most vulnerable, and most engaged in making a decision about life or death for their unborn children.”

New bishops named for St. Louis, Syracuse, N.Y.

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI has appointed Bishop Robert J. Carlson of Saginaw, Mich., as the new archbishop of St. Louis. He also accepted the resignation of Bishop James M. Moxey, who has been elected to the new archdiocese’s leadership council.

“I think he has his political debts to pay, and so he’s packing up and leaving,” said Father John Dehmer, pastor and administrator. He thinks Archbishop Carlson “is a very energetic, articulate, warm and gifted archbishop. I think he will help in pushing the peace process toward achieving peace in the area and settling the conflict and availing all things concerned of their lawful, legitimate rights.”

On life issue, Cardinal George says Obama on wrong side of history

KENNER, La. (CNS) — President Barack Obama is a “very gracious and obviously a very smart man” but he is on the “wrong side of history” when it comes to his fervent support of abortion rights, Chicago Cardinal Francis E. George told the 2009 Louisiana Priests Convention April 21.

Cardinal George, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, told 200 priests from the seven dioceses of Louisiana that, while he wants Obama to succeed in his efforts to right the economy, enhance world peace and help the poor, the president needs to understand that the Catholic Church will not allow the life issue to be abandoned. In a question-and-answer session that followed his keynote speech to priests on offering compassionate ministry to people who are hurting, Cardinal George offered a candid assessment of his 30-minute meeting with the president at the White House March 18. “I think on the life issue he’s on the wrong side of history,” the cardinal said. “I think he has his political debts to pay, and so he’s packing up and leaving.”

Cardinal George said his conversation with the president was polite but substantive.

People wear masks as they attend Mass at Metropolitan Cathedral in Mexico City

People wear masks as they attend Mass at Metropolitan Cathedral in Mexico City April 26. Fears of the spread of the swine flu had kept millions of Mexicans indoors to avoid the virus. Mexico City, one of the world’s biggest cities, practically ground to a halt with restaurants, cinemas and churches closing their doors.

Catholics, Muslims hope pope’s trip to Jordan sparks renewed relations

AMMAN, Jordan (CNS) — For some Muslim and Catholic analysts, the papal visit to Jordan May 8-11 could spark a renewal of interreligious relations. “He’s coming after Sept. 11, after the American invasion of Iraq — so many things have happened in the area (Middle East),” said Farouq Jarar, acting director of the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought in Amman.

“Understanding among Muslims and Christians is much more important now than at any time before.” The institute, founded in 1980, is an international organization that uses research and conferences to help clarify misconceptions about Islam and to spread the teachings of Islam today. Jarar said he hopes the pope’s visit will be “a new start, a new bridge for better understanding, better coexistence and more respect and acceptance.” Following his visit to Jordan, Pope Benedict will travel to Jerusalem May 11. Jarar also expressed hope that the pope will help in pushing the peace process toward achieving peace in the area and settling the conflict and availing all things concerned of their lawful, legitimate rights.

Seven communities of Dominican sisters merge to form one congregation

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (CNS) — Seven communities of Dominican sisters formally merged April 12 to form a new congregation called the Dominican Sisters of Peace. The congregation will be based in Columbus, Ohio, home to the former Dominican Sisters of St. Mary of the Springs, one of the founding communities. The sisters gathered April 14 for a ceremony at the Springs’ former motherhouse.

“There is a great sense of hope, great energy and great commitment to the mission” among the 265 sisters who gathered in St. Louis, said Sister Joan Scanlon, who has been elected to the new congregation’s leadership council. Her community, the Dominican Sisters of St. Catharine, Ky. “It is very historic when seven congregations have elected to come together,” she told The Record, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Louisville. “We have hundreds of years of ministry committed to come together.”


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Corpus Christi School, South Bend, eighth-grade student Katherine Monhout introduces her goat-friend Ida Mae to preschooler Grace Urbanski. The petting zoo was part of the activities associated with the celebration of Earth Day, learning about caring for God’s creatures along with the earth.
Indianapolis — The Indiana Catholic Conference’s (ICC) new electronic legislative action center was a rousing success as thousands of Catholics statewide engaged and influenced state lawmakers during the 2009 session of the Indiana General Assembly using the online tool available on the ICC’s Web page.

As the 150 members of the Indiana General Assembly head back to their respective home districts following the April 29 adjournment of the legislative session, the Indiana Catholic Conference applauds the efforts of the 1,300-plus Catholics who on a regular basis became engaged in the political process. The ICC also wanted to report on the success of the new online tool provided through the church’s efforts under the state’s capitol dome.

Roughly 1,300 persons were contacted about six times per month by the ICC over a four-month period. Over half who received communication from theICC opened the communication. Nearly 2,000 Catholics contacted their state or federal lawmakers using the online tool since January of 2009 when the ICC launched the new software, but many more may have called or wrote letters using the available information.

“I couldn’t be more pleased with the response and involvement of our people this year,” said Glenn Tebbe, ICC executive director, who serves as the official spokesperson for the Indiana bishops, who on a regular basis became engaged in the political process. The ICC also wanted to report on the success of the new online tool provided through the church’s efforts under the state’s capitol dome.

“We had high hopes for the new online tool, but frankly, we really weren’t sure what kind of response we would get. The response exceeded our hopes and as the session moved along we had more and more people subscribing to our electronic Catholic network,” said Tebbe.

The breakdown of the electronic communication is as follows. Roughly half of the nearly 30 e-mails sent were the I-CAN Update, the ICC’s legislative newsletter, the other half were action alerts. Of the 10 action alerts, five were state legislative alerts, five were federal alerts. On the federal alert to retain the conscience protection regulation over 1,300 persons were alerted, yet 1,866 persons opened the alert either via e-mail or on the ICC Web page, and 420 people contacted their federal representatives on the issue using the online tool. On the scholarship tax credit state alert, of the 1,250-plus persons who were alerted, over 1,500 people opened the alert either via e-mail or on the ICC Web page, and at least 511 contacted lawmakers using the online tool. Of the nearly 34,000 total messages sent by the ICC, nearly 20,000 were opened and nearly 2,000 responded by contacting lawmakers using the online software, however many more may have contacted lawmakers by phone or written a letter. Neil Thompson, ICC administrative assistant who administers the electronic program said, “What’s really great about this system is once I have the Update ready I can send it to 1,300-plus persons in under 30 seconds. Whereas before I would contact a handful of people by e-mail and they in turn contacted others of course taking much more than 30 seconds.”

Thompson added, “And, once a person follows the link, they are provided with an e-mail message to their legislator, which they can edit, which from our report looks like many of them do this.”

Thompson said that the system provides assurance that the message is received by the networker’s legislator since the system will match the constituent with their respective legislator. Thompson said that another benefit is that people don’t have to be part of the Catholic Action Network to be able to access a lot of valuable information. “All a person needs to do is go to the ICC Web page,” said Thompson.

Indiana Catholic Conference

By Brigid Curtis Ayer

No one could think of a more effective way to influence lawmakers during the 2010 session, and the ICC will continue to send out periodic updates on important developments, said Tebbe. “On the federal level, the Obama administration is moving quickly on numerous issues and there will be periodic federal action alerts. For these reasons, we encourage all to stay tuned and ready for action.”

“For those who have not yet had a chance to visit our Web page, or who would like to become part of the Catholic Action Network, there’s no time like the present. Please do stop by our Web page. We are only a few clicks away,” said Tebbe.

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

Since 1967, the ICC has worked to bring a consistent life ethic to Hoosier public policy making.

What’s available on the ICC Web page

Visitors to the ICC Web page (www.indianacc.org ), can join the Indiana Catholic Action Network and through an electronic Legislative Action Center can engage in a variety of grassroots political activities by a few simple keystrokes. One of the key features of the software allows visitors to quickly identify and contact their elected officials.

Go to www.indianacc.org for more information.
Holy Cross Father Charlie McCoy is one of three priests ordained April 18 at Notre Dame’s Sacred Heart Basilica. Father McCoy concelebrated his first Mass the next day, with his family on hand, at Christ the King Parish, where he served as a deacon, in South Bend. He expects to find out where he will be assigned in the next few weeks.

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-Pope John Paul II

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Sister Clare Marie has recipe for successful teaching

BY KAREN CLIFFORD

SOUTH BEND — Who knew that making pancakes could incorporate cooking, science and God?

Sister Clare Marie, a science teacher at Holy Family School in South Bend, knows that having fun while learning is a recipe for success in teaching. And it is this same passion that led her to her vocation as a religious in the Felician Sisters, a branch of the Third Order of St. Francis.

Sister Clare Marie, the third of 10 children, was raised on a farm near Kalamazoo, Mich. Discipline and a strong faith foundation were instilled by her parents at a young age. At one point her father was in charge of managing 53,000 chickens, so every family member was expected to participate in chores on the farm. Her love of the faith was instilled by a father who attended five years of Catholic seminary and a mother with a deep appreciation of Scripture.

“It was that conscience formation from an early age to do what was right, look out for others and try to be a good citizen that influenced my decision to become a sister,” she recalls.

After her schoolwork was complete and before she started her chores, Sister Clare Marie would take walks in the woods around the farm. The walks became an early part of her religious formation.

“Just spending that quiet time outside in the woods and praying my rosary helped me to think about why God created us and what his mission for me was,” she says.

At the age of 10, Sister Clare Marie knew she wanted to be a missionary. After hearing family stories of a great aunt that was a missionary who died of malaria in Africa, Sister Clare Marie felt a deep desire to go to that continent and serve others as well.

It was with great joy that in 2007 Sister Clare Marie was able to fulfill that wish, when 21 members, some of whom were from Holy Family Parish, visited their sister parish in Uganda to present funds for a new roof and well. In addition to enjoying the company of those at the sister parish, Sister Clare Marie, along with Sister Marilyn, a fellow Felician, who was also on the trip, was able to make a side trip to one of her order’s convents in Kenya.

“It was wonderful to pray, work and share in the community life while at the convent in Kenya,” Sister Clare Marie says.

The journey to becoming a sister had several bends in the road before taking her vows in 2003. Sister Clare Marie was accepted in the nursing program at Madonna University in Livonia, Mich., in 1999. During an orientation visit on campus with her father, she went to the information desk to pick up a brochure from the order for a friend in Canada. Sister Francileene, the president of the university, emerged from her office at that moment and invited Sister Clare Marie to consider the possibility for joining the order. She promised to pray about it.

A few weeks later Sister Clare Marie began to pray with the sisters at her dorm and the motherhouse that was just across campus. “The longer I stayed, the more at peace I felt, and I heard the call to join,” she remembers.

After completing two years of her nursing degree, Sister Clare Marie discerned that it was the right time to enter. During a sister’s novitiate, there are two months of apostolic experience, where they live in another convent away from the formation house.

During that period Sister Clare Marie spent one of the months at the Holy Family convent and decided to switch her major from nursing to education.

“I’ve always loved being around young people, and after being at Holy Family, I knew it was time to make the change,” she says.

Sister Clare Marie came to Holy Family School in 2005 as a full-time teacher after her graduation from Madonna University. Her love of hands-on science activities is highlighted in her “breakfast class,” where eighth graders learn the many scientific principles that go into making pancakes.

In addition to the fun in making pancakes, “We talk about atoms and how things bond, how to balance a chemical reaction and the difference between a physical and chemical change,” Sister Clare Marie notes. “And I try to bring God into all of this through beginning class with prayer because science is really the study of God’s creation,” she adds.

In her service to the church as a religious, Sister Clare Marie doesn’t believe she is “giving up” things in her life by taking vows. She stresses her needs are totally provided for by God.

“Poverty is not being without possessions, but being free and detached from things that distract us from serving God and others. Chastity is being free enough to be a servant and to love totally and completely as Christ did. Obedience is not following blindly the command of people, but to listening attentively to the word of God and embracing God’s will with great love and joy. It’s learning to trust God and say ‘yes’,” she says. “If this is God’s call for you, you will not be disappointed. Regardless of your vocation in life, faithfulness to Jesus is a guarantee to perfect joy and peace.”
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To share in God’s life is to share in his love

Last Sunday, Andrew Budzinski of our diocese was ordained deacon. In the fall, two young deacons are to be ordained to the priesthood for our diocese. There are currently 14 men preparing for the priesthood for this diocese and there are a number who have applied for the seminary in the coming year. The lifeblood of the church is the sacraments, and sacramental ministry is the principal work of the priesthood of the ordained.

Perhaps a good way for us to think about vocation is less as something imposed from without by God, and more as something that exists in potentiality within us from the first moments of our existence in our mother’s womb; and like our very existence, this vocation, too, is given us by God as pure gift. All the varied states of life which bring beauty and depth to the life of the church — married, single, vowed religious, ordained — are vocations that are part and parcel of who we are from the very beginnings of our life.

Vocational discernment is about discovering who it is that God has created and called us to be. And his call is such that in answering it — in making what exists in us in potentiality, nurtured by grace and with the discernment that comes from life in the church, a reality — we will find a deeper kind of fulfillment, happiness and peace than if we had simply and on our own decided who we are or who we should be.

Parents have a special obligation to nurture this sense of vocation in their children. If children are raised, formed and educated with a sense that God has called them not only to holiness by their baptism, but also to a particular state of life for which he has equipped them, so to speak, perhaps more of our young people will recognize that call from God to serve the church in priestly and religious life.

Regardless of one’s state in life — married, religious, single, ordained — the common denominator is love. God has created us to share life with him. He has created us to flourish. And to share in God’s life is to share in his love. This love — his love — is refracted like a beam of light into a panoply of colors in the church by men and women living their vocation with love and with joy.

Many of the class of 2009 had careers and are finding the priestly and religious life which bring beauty and depth to the life of the church, a reality — we will find a deeper kind of fulfillment, happiness and peace than if we had simply and on our own decided who we are or who we should be.

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Paul as liturgist

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The Year of St. Paul

Jesus is our good shepherd

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

4th Sunday of Easter
Jn 10:11-18

Once more during this Easter season, the church draws from the Acts of the Apostles for the first reading for Mass. This reading reveals the priorities and beliefs of the first Christians.

The setting is Jerusalem, where Peter and the other apostles, prayer, total devotion to the Lord, bold charity and a sense of unity characterize this community.

The community is outward looking, seeing as its solem responsibility the need to make Jesus known far beyond the circle of believers.

In this reading Peter preaches. He speaks for all the other apostles, and indeed for the community itself. Peter quite obviously is the leader.

Acts says that Peter was “filled with the Holy Spirit.” Peter was speaking in and with the power and grace of God. He emphasizes that healing a cripple, recalled earlier in Acts, occurred with the healing ability of Jesus.

In his sermon, Peter insists that no salvation is possible without Jesus, because God gave Jesus to the world as the redeemer of humankind.

The First Epistle of John is the next reading. The three Epistles, attributed to John but actually in the tradition of John, all have an eloquence and depth that are most appealing. The passage offered in this reading in fact is rather brief — only two verses — but it nonetheless is most expressive, reassuringly a declaration of the theological fact that believers are nothing less than God’s children.

The imagery is strong. No other human relationship so directly and well conveys the notion of love, caring and life giving, than that of a parent and child.

This reading also says that those who are worthy of being God’s children one day will see God, and therefore they will be with God.

St. John’s Gospel supplies the last reading, and it is a glorious revelation about the Lord Jesus. Everyone knew what herding sheep was all about, since at the time of Christ, Roman Palestine was by and large an agricultural nation. Most people had their livelihood in farming or in herding. Sheep herding was a major industry.

Another image is important. Sheep are gentle animals, vegetarians and not at all aggressive. They also are quite vulnerable. Predators easily make sheep their prey. Since sheep are such easy prey, aggressors hunt for them. Unable because of their placid nature to fight for their lives, sheep need their shepherds. Good shepherds care for the sheep, helping them to overcome the vulnerability created by their meekness and lack of cunning. Jesus, in this passage, compars us humans to the sheep. It is a fact, but a fact that humans prefer to forget. Humans are vulnerable. We need the shepherd. He is the good shepherd. He lays down life itself for us. He wishes that none of us be lost.

Reflection

In the Gospels, Jesus, on several occasions, uses the strong image of the good shepherd. It is an image that has survived the cultural transition in much of the world from the agrarian to the technological.

This weekend’s liturgy builds on this image, presenting it in the marvelous reading from the fourth Gospel. When the super literary technique of this Gospel is added to the process, the image is stunning and beckoning in its brilliance. Its meaning is clear, because of the frankness of the Gospel.

READINGS

Tuesday: Acts 11:19-26 Ps 87:1-7 Jn 10:22-30
Wednesday: Acts 12:24-13:5a Ps 67:2-3,5-6,8 Jn 12:44-50
Friday: Acts 13:26-33 Ps 2-6-11 Jn 14:1-6

14. In the parable of the Prodigal Son what job does the father give his son?

ANSWERS

1. feeding pigs
2. working in a fast food joint, serving big Macabbes
3. making mud bricks

CATEQUIZEM

By Dominic Camplisson

On May 1 the church remembers St. Joseph the Worker, as does this quiz.

1. Why is the Greek title “tekton” actually more accurate than “worker” used by tradition?
   a. In tradition, Joseph is portrayed as being too old to work.
   b. St. Joseph may have been a carpenter but “tekton” also means laborer.
   c. Joseph worked miracles before Jesus took over.

2. Why can Adam be said to have started work?
   a. He was the first person issued a paycheck in the form of loves and fishes.
   b. His and Eve’s original sin caused mankind to have to work.
   c. His name in Hebrew means “he who labors.”

3. Adam’s two sons chose different work. Which was which?
   a. Abel became a keeper of flocks and Cain was a hunter
   b. Abel was a farmer and Cain was a herdsman
   c. Abel was a herdsman and Cain was a farmer.

4. What work did the Hebrews in Egypt do for which they needed straw?
   a. They tended strawberry fields and made straw for Pharaoh’s wine.
   b. They made mud bricks that were strengthened by straw.
   c. They made bedding for the horses of Pharaoh’s cavalry.

5. Who does God tell to inform the Israelites that he will save them from labor?
   a. Moses
   b. Aaron
   c. Joseph

6. In Sirach 18, a realistic assessment notes that work can be an obstacle to education. It asks (rhetorically)
   a. How can he become learned who guides the plow?
   b. How can he become learned who milks a cow?
   c. How can he become learned after he has seen Paree?

7. Ecclesiastes 2 recounts how a man, realizing he must die, comes to
   a. see work as his salvation
   b. detest all the fruits of his labor under the sun
   c. refuse to work more for all toil was vanity

8. In Jesus’ day many Jews refused to do work on this day:
   a. any day with a pagan name
   b. the Sabbath (hence Sunday)
   c. the Sabbath (hence Saturday)

9. The CCC has a lot to say about work. Specifically it recommends that on this day, work should be avoided:
   a. Sunday
   b. payday
   c. Saturday

10. The CCC also recognizes that some people have to work that day because they are:
    a. greedy
    b. needy
    c. seedy

11. As well as that, it is understood that choosing leisure over work means:
    a. some people (who work in service industries) still must work
    b. it has a bad impact on the economy
    c. safety concerns mean gangs may take advantage

12. In the case of those who must work for government that day, the CCC recommends that:
   a. employers choose non-Christians to do those jobs
   b. they employ only orthodox Christians who have a different calendar
   c. authorities should ensure citizens some time for worship

13. The Letter of Philemon discusses the work of Onesimus. His status is one that later Christians found intolerable. He was a:
   a. convert from Islam and hence under suspicion
   b. slave
   c. nonunition deacon

On May 3, 2009

COMMENTARY

CATEQUIZEM
After Alexander the Great, empire was split between three generals

Friends, truth and ants in the kitchen

held dominion over Palestine from much distress over the earth. for many years, causing crowns and so did their sons after his death, they all put on royal Mesopotamia (in Iraq). over Asia or Syria and Ptolemy over Egypt and Cyrenaica on the upper Orontes River. Perdiccas, Ptolemy and Seleucus, between his three generals, What happened to the Jews after the strong defense, and those who find Life” states, “A faithful friend is a held dominion over Palestine from much distress over the earth. for many years, causing crowns and so did their sons after his death, they all put on royal Mesopotamia (in Iraq). over Asia or Syria and Ptolemy over Egypt and Cyrenaica on the upper Orontes River. Perdiccas, Ptolemy and Seleucus, between his three generals, What happened to the Jews after the strong defense, and those who find Life” states, “A faithful friend is a

I have been finding ants in the kitchen. This was surprising to me because we never had an ant problem before. It’s still early in the spring, and I couldn’t figure out why I’ve been finding these little pests all over the white tile. Now I know. My four-year-old is feeding them. I found her crouched over one, peering at it through a magnifying glass, and then she crumbles bread before it. “Watch!” she directed me recently, “I when I feed him, he dances, mama!” Since I have informed her that ants in the kitchen are not good and that they do not make very good pets, she has been chasing them with a broom. “Get over here! You’re not going to get away from me!” I hear her shout. And then a menacing, “Where’s your queen? We’re going to get her!”

I am often like my four year old, “feeding” undesirable things in my life. I might be aware of the spiritual pests I am unintentionally feeding or I could grow spiritually and in holiness.

This is where, I’m discovering, good friends can come in.

Friendships are more than just pleasant associations that can make life more enjoyable or provide relaxing conversation and an opportunity for sharing ideas and ideals. True friends can tell us things we need to know about ourselves and our actions. They can help us grow wise and assist us in becoming better people. They can challenge us to holiness.

St. Francis de Sales in his classic “Introduction to the Devout Life” states, “A faithful friend is a strong defense, and those who find one have found a treasure. A faithful friend is the medicine of life and immortality. Further in the book he offers this advice, “Love everyone with a deep love based on charity, but form friendships only with those who can share virtuous things with you. The higher the virtues you share and exchange with others, the more perfect your friendship will be.”

True friends will not only tell us if there’s spinach in our teeth, but often tell us the “stuffed” stuff too — like if there’s an attitude in our heart we need to eliminate. A good friend says, “Let’s go to Mass tomorrow morning. We can take the kids for a doughnut afterwards.” If we resist she may challenge us gently, “Oh come on. What’s more important than that?”

A true friend encourages us to mend our differences with another who has rubbed us the wrong way, instead of wallowing in self-pity. She makes us better by holding us to higher standards than we may want to hold ourselves, and by challenging us to live Catholicly, heroically.

True friends will walk with us on the path towards our journey to become closer to Christ in this world. As Mary D. Ford writes in the article “What Is Friendship?”, “Friends are for our growth in health, happiness and holiness on this earth in order to share together the gift of eternal life in heaven.”

These true friends can be our spouses, our siblings or previous strangers who have somehow been dropped conveniently in to our lives. We may meet such a friend at church, at our child’s school, through a mutual acquaintance. We may have known them for two years or 20. We should always recognize these people for who they are — God’s gifts and evidence of his providential care.

Here is a quick checklist of some signs of a good friend: He listens. He tells us the truth. He wants what’s best for us in the long-run, even if makes us uncomfortable in the short-term. He is trustworthy. He is loyal. And here is the most important characteristic of a good friend and friendship: Our relationship with him is based on a common love of God and desire to do his will. Basically, then, a good friend will tell us when there are “ants in our kitchen,” which need eradicating, even if we don’t want to hear it. And if we’re smart, we’ll be like my four-year-old daughter who simply changed course when her teacher was pointed out to her. We must be willing to adjust if necessary. We are truly blessed if we have friends who can see the “ants in our kitchen” and who will tell us so we can get rid of them.

After Alexander the Great, empire was split between three generals

Dr. John McKenzie says the first Book of Maccabees mentions this breakup of the kingdom: “So Alexander the Great’s officers took over his kingdom each in his own territory, and, after his death, they all put on royal crowns and so did their sons after them, for many years.”

The Ptolemy I established elephant-hunting base in Egypt (305-283 B.C.) built a library of 500,000 volumes and a university at Alexandria that made the city a hub of the Greek world. He adorned Alexandria with sphinxes, obelisks, statues, palaces, pavilions and parks. Alexandria developed into a major port between Europe and Asia, because it could accommodate large ships of this time. Ptolemy I even established elephant-hunting base camps along the northeast African coast to capture beasts for his own army.

M. Grant mentions that Ptolemy I buried Alexander the Great first at Memphis and then at Alexandria, where a worthy tomb could be erected. The Jews in Alexandria had an independent organization directed by elders under a president. Ptolemy II (283-246 B.C.) further increased Egypt’s prestige with the Pharos lighthouse at Alexandria, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

In 283 B.C., he instituted a form of Olympic games. Here a Greek elite enjoyed wealth and luxury. Native workers formed a heavily taxed underclass. The Ptolemies spread Greek lifestyle, language, and culture among their subject peoples, including the Jews.

J. Pritchard says the Jews had settled in Egypt after the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. The Elephantine Papyri even reveal a Jewish colony down south near Aswan acting as a Persian frontier garrison. During the reign of Ptolemy III of Egypt (246-221 B.C.) many Jews appear settled as farmers, artisans, soldiers, policemen, tax collectors and administrators. Jewish synagogues are known at Alexandria, Arthribis in the Nile delta, and Crocodilopolis on a large oasis 24 miles west of the Nile River.

Father Richard Hire is pastor of St. Martin de Porres Parish, Syracuse.

FATHER RICHARD HIRE

SCIMITAR

G O O D  S E R V E R

L A Y S  D O W N

W O L F

PAUL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

Father, but the gentiles, too. The whole inhabited world is included in the offering. The second eucharistic prayer expresses the same sentiment.

From East to West you gather a flock to yourself, so that a perfect offering may be made to the glory of your name.” In the Bible, “perfect” means complete, finished, whole. The offering will be perfect when all of humanity, and all the cosmos, is included in it.

The word for liturgy comes from “laos” and “ergia.” It means a work done for a people. It means the work of a few on behalf of the many.

The Christian liturgy is the work of Christ done on behalf of the human race. His work is reconciliation. God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself.

When we are initiated into Christ’s “ergia” then we become liturgical persons. We make the whole world into worship of God.

The Holy Father sees the essence of Paul’s mission as doing liturgy. At the Notre Dame Center for Liturgy, we concur. We seek to understand liturgy as the life of the church in motion. We hope you might consider joining us June 15-17 at the summer conference when we will say more about Paul as liturgical theologian. See liturgy.nd.edu for details.

Friends, truth and ants in the kitchen

EVERYDAY CATHOLIC

THERESA A. THOMAS

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Paul
COUGARS SWEEP OVER WILMINGTON COLLEGE

Celebrating ‘Senior Day’ on Sunday at Cougar Field, senior pitcher Bart Schnur added a University of Saint Francis record with his game 2 win giving the Cougars a sweep over Wilmington College. Schnur pitched the first four innings, then senior teammates Matt Degitz and John Schlichter finished what Schnur started for a 6-3 win. Schnur gets credit for his eighth win in nine decisions and he set a USF high-water mark for pitching wins in a season.

St. John soccer achieving successful season

BY MICHELLE CASTLEMAN

FORT WAYNE — With a similar roster count and many of the same players as the winning football team, St. John-New Haven’s 2009 soccer team is also experiencing much of the same success in the regular season with a 3-0 start.

In his eighth season with Raider soccer, Coach Ed McCarthy and assistants Bryan Renbarger and Curtiss Zink have a special group. At the core of the team are nine eighth-graders, most of whom have been playing soccer together since fourth grade. With 11 players needed to field a team and no seventh graders signed up, the Raiders brought up four sixth graders to complete their 13-man list.

“Our team couldn’t be doing what they are doing without each other. They all depend on each other,” explained McCarthy.

In their season opener, the Raiders downed St. Joseph-St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, 4-1, with goals scored by Adam McCarthy (two), Colin Zink and John Wellman. Next up, St. John’s played St. Charles. McCarthy scored all three goals in the 3-0 shut out.

According to Coach Ed McCarthy, St. John-Fort Wayne gave the Raiders their toughest game so far in a 1-0 defensive battle.

McCarthy scored the lone goal of the game, but it was Jake Britton, Jeff Heaton and Zink’s tough defense that held strong for the Raiders in the rain and cold, while Weston Painter had several awesome saves. And in a physical match-up against the St. Vincent 8 team, the Raiders won, 3-1, with goals from McCarthy (two) and Wellman.

Finally, last week the Raiders defeated the St. Vincent 7 team, 3-0, with the Bishop Dwenger-bound McCarthy scoring all three goals once again.

The middle child of Coach Ed McCarthy’s seven children, Adam, is most likely the leading scorer in the CYO this season, although official stats were not available. McCarthy also felt his goalie Painter could be tops in the league for least goals given up. The Raiders have just one match left yet in the regular season facing the St. Jude Eagles this week.

A seeded tournament will follow and St. John-New Haven is certainly a favorite after finishing runner-up to St. Charles in a 4-0 game a year ago.

ROYAL READER IS KING FOR A DAY

Jason Baker, punter for the Carolina Panthers, was a special guest at St. Therese School. He traded his football jersey for a royal cape, crown and scepter. Then he proceeded to walk down a red carpet while students in grades pre-k through grade 3 bowed to greet him. He shared a story, “T is for Touchdown,” with the students. After the story was finished, Baker took time to talk to the students and answer any questions, they might have about his career.

For some kids in our community, there is more than one annual trip to the doctor.

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Hansen’s ‘Exiles’ offers good Catholic storytelling

BY YORK YOUNG

There has been some talk in the Catholic book market recently about the lack of fiction that is specifically Catholic. There is even some debate about whether that is necessarily a bad thing, because there are so many questions about Catholic fiction. Does it need to be about Catholic topics from a Catholic writer? What are the features that make it specifically Catholic? And how does one evaluate — if you can identify it — the quality of Catholic writing? What makes it good?

Wherever the state of Catholic fiction may or may not be going, Catholics interested in this type of writing must take what they find. A current find of good, if not excellent, Catholic storytelling is in Ron Hansen’s “Exiles,” a historical novel that follows the parallel stories of five nuns who lost their lives in the famous Deutschland shipwreck in 1875 and the life of Gerard Manley Hopkins, a Jesuit who wrote the poem “The Wreck of the Deutschland,” remembering the fate of those Catholic sisters.

Alternating between the two stories as he goes along, Hansen captures the passion, courage and dedication to Our Lord that religious embody, sometimes in a day by day style that might look uninteresting in snapshot form, but becomes heroic in the face of the overall sacrifices they make for Christ — and humanity.

Father Hopkins, a convert, struggled and suffered for much of his adult life. Converting against his parents’ wishes, he often felt alone in his faith. In addition, he was often sickly and gave up poetry at a young age, letting go of what he thought was a worldly affectation that would hinder his spirituality. He kept this under wraps so well that many of his Jesuit colleagues had no idea that he had written poetry.

“The Wreck of the Deutschland,” however, was composed because of his great affection for the inspirational story of the five German sisters, and the encouragement of a friend. His poetry that was made known to some in the literary world of the time barely moved them to comment, but after his death, at the young age of 44, the respect for his ability slowly grew. Now, he is considered to have been at the forefront of modern poetry.

Meanwhile, the tale of the doomed nuns opens with snapshots of each of the five in their early years, hearing the call of God, perhaps presented with a bit too much piety by Hansen. Once they reach the ship, the high seas becomes an adventure, with sharp action writing mixed with the appropriate amount of character depth to lead the reader to embrace those who are about to face disaster.

Hansen, a Catholic deacon, is well-known for authoring “The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford,” made into a well-received movie starring Brad Pitt and Casey Affleck. Turning his attention to a disaster and the inner yearnings and desires of religious is an interesting combination, one that he pulls off with an adequate measure of poise.

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**What’s Happening?**

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

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**misc. happenings**

**Little Flower Theater to perform ‘Oliver’**

Fort Wayne — St. Therese Little Flower Theater will present “Oliver,” the musical based on Charles Dickens’ “Oliver Twist,” Friday, May 15, and Saturday, May 16, at 7 p.m. in the University of Saint Francis North Campus Auditorium on Spring Street. Tickets are $7 and available by calling (260) 747-9139 or (260) 747-2343 or at the door the day of the show. A canned food item is requested for the Food Pantry.

**The Enneagram: Understanding Yourself and Your Relationships workshop at Victory Noll Center**

Huntington — Victory Noll Center in Huntington hosts presenters Sister Mary Boeving and Sister Ann Walters, who will explore these ideas in the program “The Enneagram: Understanding Yourself and Your Relationships” on Saturday, May 16, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The cost for the program is $35 and includes lunch. Registration deadline is May 1. For more information contact director Sue Wilhelm at (260) 356-0628, ext. 128, or by e-mail at suewilhelm@olvm.org.

**open house planned**

Fort Wayne — Villa of the Woods Senior Residential Living Center, 5610 Noll Ave., will have an open house Tuesday, May 19, from 2-5 p.m. Call (260) 745-7039 for information.

**Light Weigh orientation meeting planned**

Mishawaka — The Light Weigh Catholic Bible Study DVD series, without weigh-ins, orientation meeting will be held Monday, May 4, at 6:30 p.m. at St. Joseph Parish office, 220 W. Fourth St.

**Harvest House announces Older American Day celebration**

Kendallville — The Harvest House Council will have an Older American Day celebration Thursday, May 14, at Immaculate Conception Church. Doors open at 10:15 a.m. with Mass at 11 a.m. A luncheon will be served and includes entertainment by a female barbershop group and raffles. Tickets are $8 and reservations are needed to Rita at (260) 347-4014 by May 9.

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**devotions**

**Elizabeth ministry memorial Mass**

Granger — St. Pius X Parish will have a memorial Mass for those who grieve because of the death of an infant or child, miscarriage or abortion (whether the loss was recent or long ago) or the loss of becoming a parent because of infertility on Tuesday, May 12, at 6 p.m. Following the Mass, members of the Elizabeth Ministry support group will gather to share stories, pray for comfort and healing and support one another through shared experiences. For more information contact Theresa at (574) 243-8770 or Tdepung5@aol.com.

**First Saturday devotions**

Fort Wayne — First Saturday devotions will be Saturday, June 7, at the following locations: Fort Wayne — St. Joseph, 7:15 a.m.; St. Charles, 8 a.m.; Sacred Heart, 7:30 a.m.; New Haven — St. Louis Besancon, 8:10 a.m.; St. John, 6:55 a.m.; Arcola — St. Patrick, 7:15 a.m.; Garrett — St. Joseph, 8:40 a.m. Call (260) 9396 to have your listing added.

**Little Flower Holy Hour**

Fort Wayne — Father Jason Freiberg will celebrate the Little Flower Holy Hour at MacDougal Chapel on Tuesday, May 5 at 7:15 p.m. to pray for priests and vocations. Father Jason is the associate pastor at St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Fort Wayne.

**Fundraisers**

**Fish, chicken and tenderloin dinner**

Huntington — St. Mary Parish will sponsor a fish, chicken and tenderloin dinner (by Dan’s), on May 12, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, 333 W. Colfax Ave. The cost is $7 per person and children five and under eat free. Volunteers are needed to donate salads or desserts. To purchase tickets, donate or for more information contact the Dismas House office at (260) 447-2352 or e-mail dismassouthbend@sbcglobal.net.

**Rummage sale to benefit south side community center**

Fort Wayne — The St. Henry Community Center, 3029 E. Paulding Rd., will have a rummage sale Friday, May 15, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday, May 16, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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**Our Lady of Good Hope plans Cinco De Mayo and Kermes festival**

South Bend — Our Lady of Hungary, 735 W. Calvert, will have a Cinco De Mayo and Kermes festival Saturday, May 2, from noon to 5 p.m. in the school gym and grounds. Festival games, traditional food, pinatas, Mexican bingo, live music and dancing groups.

**Salad luncheon to benefit Dismas House**

South Bend — A salad luncheon to benefit Dismas House will be held on Thursday, May 7, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, 333 W. Colfax Ave. The cost is $7 per person and children five and under eat free. Volunteers are needed to donate salads or desserts. To purchase tickets, donate or for more information contact the Dismas House office at (574) 243-8770 or Tdepung5@aol.com.

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**On Saturday an International Food Festival will be held. Proceeds further the mission of outreach to the diverse population on the southeast side of Fort Wayne.**

**Run for the Rams dinner auction**

Huntington — The Run for the Rams dinner and auction will be Saturday, May 2, at the PAL Club, 2009 Riverside Dr., at 5 p.m. Tickets are $60 per person by calling (260) 356-2520. All proceeds benefit Huntington Catholic School.

**Rummage sale**

Bremen — Altar Rosary Society of St. Dominic Parish will have a rummage sale on Thursday, May 7, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Friday, May 8, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the parish hall, 803 Bike St.

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**Rest in Peace**

**Notre Dame**

Father Kevin Rousseau, CSC
Old College Notre Dame

**South Bend**

Father Tom McNally, CSC
Our Lady of Fatima House Notre Dame

**Election of the Lord**

Father William Peil
St. Anne Home Fort Wayne

**Pentecost Sunday**

Father Larry Kramer
St. Paul of the Cross Columbia City
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From the moment of birth there is that mystical bond between mother and child... a source of strength, comfort, and mercy that never fails... someone to count on.

Can we count on you to help us continue to provide:

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- Brief Services
- Children’s Cottage
- Counseling Services
- ECHO (Education Creates Hope & Opportunity)
- Food Pantries
- Foster/Adoptive/Kinship Care Training
- Immigration Services
- Hispanic Health Advocate
- Pregnancy Services
- Refugee Employment Services
- Refugee Services
- RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program)
- Senior AIDS Employment
- Villa of the Woods Senior Residential Living

Thank you... for using your Catholic Charities envelope in the collection on Mother’s Day!

Salute the Class of 2009!

Express your best wishes to your graduate in TODAY’S CATHOLIC pull-out keepsake section to be in homes on May 14, 2009.

This 4” x 2” “grad-ad” costs $50.00

“grad-ad” sizes and prices:
4 inches wide x 2 inches deep - $50
(1/8 page) 4 inches x 4 inches - $100
(1/4 page) 6 inches wide x 5.5 inches deep - $150
(1/2 page) 10.25 inches wide x 6.5 inches deep - $300

deadline for ads is May 1, 2009.

Today’s Catholic “grad-ad’s” are open to all high school and college graduates in the diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

Prepare your own congratulatory ad... according to sizes shown. Preferred format is PDF. We cannot accept Microsoft Publisher Files.

For information or to place your ad, please call:
South Bend area: Jeanette Simon (574)234-0687
email: jsimon@fw.diocecesewsb.org

Fort Wayne area: Tess Steffen (260) 399-1457
email: Sales@fw.diocecesewsb.org

Susan Boyle, Sister Faustina and Divine Mercy

BY DIANE FREEBY

SOUTH BEND — What do recent YouTube sensation Susan Boyle and St. Maria Faustina Kowalska have in common? According to the homilist at the April 19 Divine Mercy Mass held at Holy Family Church, quite a bit.

Franciscan Father Robert Melnick shared his analogy with the faithful on hand to wrap up the Divine Mercy novena by participating in Holy Mass.

Father Melnick spoke of the 47-year-old woman from a small town in Scotland. For those who have not seen her on the television show, “Britain’s Got Talent,” Boyle is the woman described in some newspapers as “the spinster who lived a drab existence.”

That’s the secular media’s view. In reality, Boyle is the youngest of nine children from a very devout Roman Catholic family, living in a primarily Protestant country. Currently unemployed, she devoted her life to taking care of her mother until she died. Now, Boyle wants to be a professional singer.

“Everybody thought she was a joke,” explained Father Melnick, referring to the condescending looks Boyle received from the show’s judges and audience members as she took the stage, “until she started to sing, ‘I Dreamed a Dream,’ from a Broadway musical. ‘I dreamed a dream, I dreamed that love would not ever die. I dreamed that God would be forgiving.’ Those words, that music, that woman electrified the auditorium and everyone watching, and even electrifies people watching it on YouTube right now.”

Father Melnick described the crowd that jumped to its feet with applause, “like the crowd did while witnessing the incredible beauty another unlike-ly woman revealed by singing on a popular television show. Father Melnick continued, “The Lord wants us to be Faustinas praying, sacrificing, giving of ourselves. The Lord wants us to be Faustinas pray-er of the Divine Mercy of Jesus. He described St. Faustina as “another obscure woman who changed the world.”

Father Melnick explained how St. Faustina, a young polish nun who was not seen as someone remarkable during her lifetime, was right where Jesus wanted her to be.

“She was in his very heart,” said Father Melnick, describing how St. Faustina had “mytical experience after mystical experience, where the Lord spoke to her. Our Lady spoke to her... giving her the mes-sage of hope. A message of hope for all of us. A message of hope for a world that had become increasingly cynical. A world that had become increasingly hopeless. And the Lord said, I want everyone to know, though your sins may be scarlet, I will make you white as snow. Though you may be the worst sinner in the world, I want to show you my mercy... my mercy is greater than sin! My love is greater than evil.”

Passing to let that message sink in, Father Melnick asked why a message like that doesn’t grab the crowd today. He wondered why it doesn’t have people spontaneous-ly rising to their feet with applause, like the crowd did while witnessing the incredible beauty another unlike-ly woman revealed by singing on a popular television show.

Father Melnick continued, “The Lord wants us to be Faustinas pray-ing, sacrificing, giving of ourselves to others. The Lord wants us to be Susans, willing to stand up, and even to look like a fool until people hear that we have a message they are desperate to hear and to embrace in their lives. If people only knew the incredible beauty of God’s promises.”

As he wrapped up his homily, Father Melnick referred back to the United Kingdom’s version of “American Idol.” “Britain’s got talent, but the church has got salvation! We’re not contestants. We’re members of the family. We don’t have to worry about being eliminated. The Lord has reached out to us. He asks us today to reach out to each other.”

Young people help carry the life-size picture of the Divine Mercy up to the altar of South Bend’s Holy Family Church, placing it alongside other items representing area parishes participating in the novena. Divine Mercy Mass was concelebrated by Holy Family pastor Father Bernard Galic, Father Edward O’Connor of Notre Dame, Father Chuck Herman of St. John the Baptist and homilist Franciscan Father Robert Melnick.

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