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The giving spirit
St. Vincent parishes abound with Christmas joy
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Diocesan offices closed
Dec. 23, Dec. 26, Dec. 30
Cathedral Bookstore open Dec. 23

Mary adores the sleeping Christ Child in this work by Italian Renaissance painter Giovanni Bellini. The Christmas season begins with the Dec. 24 evening vigil commemorating the birth of Christ and ends with the feast of the Baptism of the Lord Jan. 9.
Contemplate the first Christmas

IN TRUTH AND CHARITY

BY BISHOP KEVIN C. RHoades

A s we contemplate the love of God in the Incarnation, I invite you to reflect on the famous account of the first Christmas as described in the second chapter of the Gospel of Saint Luke, the passage read at Christmas midnight Mass. In that account, we read about Mary and Joseph traveling from Nazareth to Bethlehem where “there was no room for them in the inn.” We read about Mary giving birth to Jesus, and then about the appearance of the angels to the shepherds with the “good news of great joy… For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Christ and Lord.” Continuing with the reading of Saint Luke’s Gospel, in the passage read at the Christmas Mass at Dawn, we read about the shepherds going to see “the infant lying in the manger” and their “glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen.”

This Christmas column, I’d like to reflect on the eyewitnesses of the first Christmas: Mary, Joseph and the shepherds. When we prepare our Christmas crèches, we place figures of these persons around the newborn child as Savior, since the name “Jesus,” thus proclaiming the mission of the Incarnation and Redemption. Like Mary, Joseph is exemplary in his faith and obedience. After the angel’s announcement to him in a dream, Joseph “did as the angel commanded him and took Mary as his wife.”

Saint Joseph was the guardian of the Holy Family, including on that journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem. He was an eyewitness to the birth of Jesus. Later, at the circumcision, Joseph named the child “Jesus,” thus proclaiming the mission of the newborn child as Savior, since the name “Jesus” means “the one who saves.”

As Mary contemplated the event of the first Christmas in her heart, we can imagine that Joseph did the same. Saint Joseph surrendered his whole life to the care of Jesus and Mary. Very early on, when Jesus’ life was threatened by King Herod at the massacre of the Holy Innocents, Saint Joseph protected Jesus when he took him and Mary and fled into Egypt.

Saint Joseph is the patron of the Catholic Church. Pope Leo XIII wrote: “It is a fitting and most worthy of Joseph’s dignity that, in the same way that he once kept unceasing holy watch over the family of Nazareth, so now does he protect and defend with his heavenly patronage the Church of Christ.” God entrusted the beginnings of our redemption to the faithful care of Saint Joseph. We ask Saint Joseph to help us to imitate his faithfulness and purity of heart.

The Shepherds

It is not incidental that God chose shepherds, the lowly and unrefined, as the first to receive the good news of the Savior’s birth. They were struck with great fear when the angel of the Lord appeared to them. Immediately, the angel told them to fear not and proclaimed to them “the good news of great joy” of Jesus’ birth. They then went in haste to adore the infant Jesus.

The shepherds remind us of God’s merciful love, which is especially shown toward the poor and humble. The shepherds are an example for us since they responded enthusiastically and immediately to the angel’s invitation. They are also an example for us of our mission of evangelization.

May we contemplate the love of God in the Incarnation, and have the joy of the shepherds when they were told that there was no room for the newborn child in their stable. May we have the joy of Saint Joseph when he took Jesus and Mary and fled into Egypt.

May we and the shepherds. You, the faithful of our diocese, will be remembered in my prayers in a special way throughout the Christmas season. May you and your families and friends have a blessed and merry Christmas!

I end this column with a prayer for Christmas Eve, actually an invitation to prayer, composed by Pope Benedict XVI:

Let us ask the Lord to grant us the grace of looking upon the crib this night with the simplicity of the shepherds, so as to receive the joy with which they returned home (cf. Luke 2:20). Let us ask Him to give us the humility and the faith with which Saint Joseph looked upon the child that Mary had conceived by the Holy Spirit. Let us ask the Lord to let us be humble and meek in following the example of Saint Joseph. We ask Saint Joseph to help us to imitate his faithfulness and purity of heart.

May God bless you and yours with a happy and holy Christmas and New Year, and may He fill your heart with the joy of Christmas, the mystery we celebrate at Christmas, the mystery of salvation, following the example of the Mother of the Savior.

The Nativity by French painter Noel Cypel features Mary, Joseph and angels in adoration of the Christ Child.
Evidence of alleged miracle credited to Archbishop Sheen heads to Rome

By Tom Dermydo

PEORIA, Ill. (CNS) — Boxes wrapped in ribbon and a hug little boy are Christmas images, but the combination had another joyful meaning Dec. 11 during ceremonies closing the Archdiocese of Peoria's inquiry into an alleged miraculous healing through the intercession of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen. “May God, who has begun this great work, bring it to fulfillment,” said Peoria Bishop Daniel R. Jenky after affinitying a wax seal on a box containing evidence gathered in the past three months by an investigatory tribunal. The assembly gathered for the special Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral responded with sustained applause.

That evidence is now on its way to Rome for consideration by the Congregation for Saints’ Causes. The congregation is studying the sainthood cause of Archbishop Sheen, a central Illinois native and priest of the Peoria Diocese who became an internationally known evangelist, radio/TV personality, writer and missionary.

In a pew just outside the cathedral sanctuary, the focus of the testimonials contained in the box — 15-month-old James Fulton Engstrom sat contentedly with his parents and two older siblings, squirming occasionally as all healthy little boys will do.

“For a lot of us it felt like a full-circle moment,” said James’ mother, Bonnie Engstrom. “It is a blessing, but it is a full-circle moment.”

Engstrom recalled sitting in the same cathedral where Archbishop Sheen had been ordained in 1919 — a few days after James’ birth and “begging for a miracle” during a holy hour attended by family and friends.

Considered stillborn on Sept. 16, 2010, after a routine pregnancy, James was without a pulse for the first 61 minutes of his life. It was only when doctors at OSF St. Francis Medical Center in Peoria were ready to call the time of death that his heart started beating. The doctors had warned the parents he might not be able to function normally, but they were proved wrong.

“It’s an amazing story,” said Msgr. Jason Gray, who served as episcopal delegate to the investigatory tribunal and was responsible for guiding the process. An oath of secrecy sworn by tribunal members kept Msgr. Gray from commenting further about the findings of the tribunal or expectations regarding its review in Rome.

But family members are free to talk, and Travis and Bonnie Engstrom — residents of Goodfield and members of St. Luke’s Parish in Eureka — have widely shared the story of their son and how they believe he is alive and well because of a healing by Christ and the intercession of Archbishop Sheen.

The Engstroms were familiar with the famed orator — perhaps best known for his popular “Life Is Worth Living” television show seen by millions in the 1950s — and Bonnie had asked him to watch over her pregnancy. They decided that if their baby boy, his middle name would be Fulton. Travis made good on that intention during an emergency baptism as they awaited an ambulance after James was born in crisis at their home.

Bonnie remembers praying to Archbishop Sheen as CPR was performed on her newborn, and asking family and friends to seek his intercession when doctors warned James might be blind and unable to function normally after his heart began beating.

Fifteen months later, James is medication-free, has just been released from physical therapy, and continues to meet growth milestones.

“He’s just a normal kid,” said Bonnie, who credits Christ with healing her son “for His greater honor and glory.”

She told The Catholic Post, Peoria diocesan newspaper, that she and her husband were “amazed and impressed” by the thoroughness of the tribunal’s inquiry. The evidence includes both medical records and witness testimonies.

“When they stepped they wanted to flesh out those details, and do it with integrity and honesty,” said Bonnie. “Not that we wouldn’t expect that from the Church, but the extent was really impressive.”

A large painting of Archbishop Sheen was placed in the cathedral sanctuary near the Advent wreath for the Dec. 11 Mass and ceremonies. Among the celebrants was Father Andrew Apostoli, a Franciscan Friar of the Renewal from New York who is vice postulator for the cause.

Patricia Gibson, chancellor of the Diocese of Peoria, invited tribunal members into the sanctuary for the ceremonies, and Bishop Jenky was assisted in sealing the boxes with traditional hot wax by Msgr. Stanley Deputa, executive director of the Sheen Foundation.

A second box of original copies was sealed to be preserved in the archives of the Diocese of Peoria.

In 2011, a number of new laws were passed in the Indiana State Legislature concerning labor unions. Additional legislation is being proposed concerning workers and labor unions. These laws and the proposed new legislation have certainly generated significant debate and emotion within our community. As a Church, we Catholics always seek to promote justice and the common good and foster goodwill and harmony within our community.

The Catholic Church has a long history of promoting workers’ rights and justice in the market place. In 1891, Pope Leo XIII outlined the basic principles in his encyclical letter “Rerum Novarum.” Among other things, the pope clarified Catholic social teaching on the protection of basic economic and political rights including the right to a just wage and the right to organize associations or unions to defend just claims. To that end we offer a brief review of key principles from Catholic social teaching that should be kept in mind.

The intrinsic dignity of the human person

The intrinsic dignity of the human person is at the core value of Catholic Social Teaching. “Men and women, in the concrete circumstances of history, represent the heart and soul of Catholic social thought.”7 The whole of the Church’s social doctrine, in fact, develops from the principle that affirms the inviolable dignity of the human person. 2

This dignity grounds certain rights including (but not limited to) the right to a just wage; 3 the right to a working environment that is not harmful to the workers’ physical health or to their moral integrity; 4 and the right to assemble and form associations. 5

Rights have limits that are shaped by the rights of others, and by the responsibilities that come with the exercise of those rights.

The right to a just wage

“Renunciation is the most important means for achieving justice in work relationships,”6 Workers must be paid a wage that allows them to live a truly human life and to fulfill their family obligations in a worthy manner.

However, the right to a just wage is not absolute and other factors shape the assessment of a just wage: namely, the effective contribution which each individual makes to the economic effort and the financial state of the company for which he or she works.7

The right of free association

Church teaching supports the right of groups of employees to freely associate and to form unions. “They (unions) are indeed a mouthpiece for the struggle for social justice . . . but it is not a struggle ‘against’ others.”8 The role of unions is not to “play politics” in the sense that the expression is commonly understood today. Unions do not have the character of political parties struggling for power; they should not be subjected to the decision of political parties or have too close links with them. 9 Of particular concern are unions that use their resources to support politicians or political parties that clearly devalue the sanctity of human life or the institution of marriage. The protection of the rights and the integrity of any marriage of one man and one woman, are foundational elements of the common good.

The Church has a sacred reverence for the dignity of conscience and for the right to act in freedom to make moral decisions.10 In keeping with this, any form of coercion on the part of ownership, management or a union is to be condemned.

Closing thoughts

We offer our teaching and principles. How these are applied is another matter altogether, to be discerned within the political and public forums. “The Church’s social doctrine teaches that relations within the world of work must be marked by cooperation: hatred and attempts to struggle for power; they should not be subjected to the decision of political parties or have too close links with them.” 10 Of particular concern are unions that use their resources to support politicians or political parties that clearly devalue the sanctity of human life or the institution of marriage. The protection of the integrity of any marriage of one man and one woman, are foundational elements of the common good.

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Joe Stackowicz never guessed when he started his career as a general agent for the Knights of Columbus that it would lead him to see not just one pope but three. In 1972, Joe, as he likes to be called, won his first trip with the Knights and visited Poland and Italy.

“There were 57 of us on the trip,” recalled Joe. The Knights of Columbus arranged a special visit with Pope Paul VI. “It was so special, it really hit us all.” The Knights attended a special Mass with the pope and gathered in the courtyard with thousands of other tourists to see the pope give his blessing from the window.

Joe’s second visit with the pope would come a few years later when he again won a trip to Italy. The Knights were able to have another private meeting, this time with Pope John Paul I. “It was a special trip, the Mass we attended was so beautiful,” Joe said.

In 1992, Joe would have another chance to go to Italy and see the pope. The trip was won again through the Knights and this time Joe’s wife, Fran, and two of his grandchildren were able to go with him.

“The trip was outstanding. We were able to have a private meeting with Pope John Paul II in his residence. It was incredible. At that time the Vatican took all photos and we were able to have eight pictures taken with the pope. I spoke with him in Polish, though mine was a bit broken, it was still very special. Everyone had been saying how much I resembled John Paul II. When I was able to meet him I had to agree,” laughed Joe.

On this trip many Knights attended Mass with their wives. Joe recalled how one wife was so excited to meet the pope when they first arrived that “she practically flew over the isle to shake his hand, we all had a laugh about that,” he said smiling.

“It was a trip of a lifetime, something we will never forget.” Joe was even given a miter hat by the pope that Joe would get one more chance to see the pope, and this time he wasn’t going to miss it. In October 1995, Joe’s son John arranged special seats for his parents when John Paul II celebrated Mass at Giants Stadium in New Jersey. It was the second largest crowd to ever attend an event at Giants Stadium, with 82,948 in attendance.

“It was pouring rain the whole time,” recalled Joe. “We said the rosary five times waiting for him to arrive. But when he did it was worth it. To see him again was wonderful. I felt so blessed to be near him. It was a wonderful Mass, even as God showered rain down on us. I will never forget it.”

“I was absolutely thrilled,” Joe said. “I was able to meet him I had to agree,” laughed Joe.

Joe Stackowicz is shown as he met Pope John Paul II in 1992.

PROVIDED BY THE STACKOWICZ FAMILY

Joe has traveled all over the world. He often travels with his children and grandchildren. “We try to take a trip every year.” In fact he visited Poland with his grandson a few years ago to meet some long-lost relatives and see the places Pope John Paul II lived and worked.

“It was an incredible experience. We visited all over and found relatives we never knew we had. In fact, his grandson fell in love with a distant relative and the two were married last year. Now that’s a productive trip!” Joe said laughing. They have also visited Mexico, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic. “God’s world is beautiful, I am very lucky to have been able to see so much of it.”

Joe looks back on his visits with the popes and knows how fortunate he has been. “To have the chance to see the pope is special, I truly believe I have been blessed and hope my streak will not end at John Paul II.”

CRP, FIRST AID and UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS CLASSES

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Inc., a certified American Safety & Health Training Center, is now offering CPR, First Aid and Universal Precautions Classes to the community. We are currently registering individuals to attend our classes that will be held at Villa of the Woods (5610 Noll Avenue, Fort Wayne) on the second Tuesday of each month and we’re also willing to schedule additional classes as needed. With a minimum number of participants, arrangements can be made for us to come to your agency site to provide training services. Classes begin January 10, 2012.

- Adult, Infant & Child CPR & AED (4 hours) - $25 per person
- First Aid (1 hour) - $15 per person
- Universal Precautions (1 hour) - $10 per person
- Adult, Infant, Child CPR, AED, & First Aid (5 hours) - $35 per person
- Adult, Infant, Child CPR, AED, First Aid & Universal Precautions (6 hours) - $45 per person

To register for a training session or to make arrangements for training at your agency site, contact Robin Springsstead at (260) 422-5625 or via e-mail at rspringstead@ccfwsb.org

Knights of Columbus
In Service to One - In Service to All

I am...
My Brother’s Keeper.
Join Us and live your Catholic Faith.

Contact Indiana Membership Director
Jerry Brown:
membership@indianakofc.org

For more information about the Knights, go to our website:
http://www.indianakofc.org

2011 top news
STORIES
1. Roman Missal
   Years of planning went into it, followed by catechesis over the past several months to prepare everyone for the first use of the new English translation of the Roman Missal.
2. Economy
3. Arab spring
4. Health care
5. Irish church sex abuse scandal

NEWSMAKERS
1. Pope Benedict XVI
   He has been the top religious newsmaker in the CNS poll every year since 2006.
2. Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan
3. President Barack Obama
4. Blessed John Paul II
5. Sister Elizabeth Johnson

Results from an annual CNS pool of journalists in the Catholic media. Source: CNS

Our Founder
Venerable Michael McGivney

PROVIDED BY THE STACKOWICZ FAMILY


BY TRISH LINNER

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Our Founder
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Teaching young about human dignity promotes peace, justice, pope says

BY CINDY WOODEN

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — When young people recognize the dignity and beauty of every human life, including their own, and are supported in their natural desire to make the world a better place, they become agents of justice and peace in the world, Pope Benedict XVI said.

Peace and justice are built on “a profound respect for every human being and helping others to live a life consonant with this supreme dignity,” the pope said in his message for the World Day of Peace 2012.

The Catholic Church celebrates World Peace Day Jan. 1. The pope’s message for the occasion was released Dec. 16 at the Vatican and sent, through Vatican ambassadors, to the leaders of nations around the world.

The theme the pope chose for the 2012 celebration was “Educating Young People in Justice and Peace.”

He asked parents and teachers to be more attentive to the hopes and fears of young people today and to their search for true values, and he asked governments to put more resources into education and job creation.

And the pope asked young people themselves to take their schooling seriously and to be open to the example and knowledge their elders have to share.

He asked them “to be patient and persevering in seeking justice and peace, in cultivating the taste and desire to make the world a better place.”

Adults have a serious responsibility to help the young fulfill their potential, not just by sharing information with them, but by being examples of what it means to live lives marked by the joy of faith, charity and respect for others, he said.

“Today more than ever we need authentic witnesses, and not simply people who parcel out rules and facts: We need witnesses capable of seeing farther than others because their life is so much broader,” the pope said.

Educating people in justice and peace begins in the family, where they learn to value the gift of life, solidarity, respect for rules, forgiveness and hospitality, he said.

Too many young people today are missing that basic human formation because “we are living in a world where family lies, and life itself, are constantly threatened and not infrequently fragmented,” he said.

Pope Benedict appealed to parents to give their children “the most precious of treasures,” which is the gift of their time.

The pope also urged governments to make it possible for parents to choose the type of education they want their children to receive and to enact immigration reforms aimed at “reuniting families separated by the need to earn a living.”

Presenting the message at a Vatican news conference, Cardinal Turkson, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, said the pope’s message highlights the fact that he sees young people not only as hope for the future, but as “an active part, the most vital part of the human family,” in a world that needs energy and new ideas.

Bishop Mario Tosco, secretary of the justice and peace council, said the young people who energized the Arab Spring movements toward democracy this year illustrate the fact that the young have a positive role to play in society today.

They proclaimed to the world that “there can be social justice in their societies if there is democracy and, vice versa, that if there is democracy, there can be social justice,” he said.

The heart of the pope’s message focused on what he called the “integral formation of the person, including the moral and spiritual dimension.”

“Man is a being who bears within his heart a thirst for truth — a truth which is not partial, but capable of explaining life’s meaning — since he was created in the image and likeness of God,” the pope wrote in his message.

Acknowledging God as creator leads to recognizing “one’s own profound dignity and the inviolability of every single person,” Pope Benedict said.

Based on that dignity, people come to understand that there are certain things that always are either right or wrong, he said.

“Deep within his conscience, man discovers a law that he did not lay upon himself, but which he must obey. Its voice calls him to love and do what is good, to avoid evil and to take responsibility for the good he does and the evil he commits,” the pope said.

Pope Benedict said peace is not simply a gift to be received from God, it is a task people of good will must undertake.

“In order to be true peacemakers, we must educate ourselves in compassion, solidarity, working together, fraternity, in being active within the community and concerned to raise awareness about national and international issues and the importance of seeking adequate mechanisms for the redistribution of wealth, the promotion of growth, cooperation for development and conflict resolution,” he said.
Bishop urges Congress to heed needs of jobless and their families

WASHINGTON (CNS) — With the median length of unemployment reaching 10 months and more than four job seekers for every opening, Congress must find ways to continue unemployment compensation to protect jobless workers and their families, said the chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development. “For millions of American workers and their families, economic hardship continues and grows,” said Bishop Stephen E. Blaire of Stockton, Calif., in a Dec. 12 letter to House members. “The U.S. Catholic bishops have long advocated that the most effective way to build a just economy is the availability of decent work at decent wages,” he added. “When the economy fails to generate sufficient jobs, there is a moral obligation to ensure that the life and dignity of unemployed workers and their families.” The House was to vote as early as Dec. 13 on a Republican-backed proposal to restore the federal extended unemployment benefits program. Unless the program is extended, millions will lose their unemployment benefits beginning Jan. 1. Bishop Blaire urged the House members to “consider the moral and human consequences more for your district than the most vulnerable among us, especially unemployed workers and their families.” On the same day as the letter, the U.S. bishops’ Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development announced a relaunch of its poverty awareness campaign, Poverty USA, with a revamped website at www.usccb.org/about/catholic-campaign-for-human-development/povertyusa and a new Facebook presence at www.facebook.com/povertyusa.

New missal translation introduced in 2011 also an evangelization tool

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl doesn’t have a problem with the fact that there will be some missteps and some wrong words spoken during the first weeks of using the new English translation of the Roman Missal at Mass. “We are going to have to live with the fact that not every celebration is going to be perfect,” the archbishop of Louisville said in a Dec. 12 letter to House members. “The U.S. Catholic bishops have long advocated that the most effective way to build a just economy is the availability of decent work at decent wages,” he added. “When the economy fails to generate sufficient jobs, there is a moral obligation to ensure that the life and dignity of unemployed workers and their families.” The House was to vote as early as Dec. 13 on a Republican-backed proposal to restore the federal extended unemployment benefits program. Unless the program is extended, millions will lose their unemployment benefits beginning Jan. 1. Bishop Blaire urged the House members to “consider the moral and human consequences more for your district than the most vulnerable among us, especially unemployed workers and their families.” On the same day as the letter, the U.S. bishops’ Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development announced a relaunch of its poverty awareness campaign, Poverty USA, with a revamped website at www.usccb.org/about/catholic-campaign-for-human-development/povertyusa and a new Facebook presence at www.facebook.com/povertyusa.

U.S. soldiers retire colors signifying end of U.S. military presence in Iraq

U.S. Army Gen. Lloyd Austin III, right, and Army Sgt. Major Joseph Allen, center, seal a fabric case as they retire the U.S. military’s ceremonial flag at the Baghdad Diplomatic Support Center, signifying the end of U.S. military presence in Iraq Dec. 15. The U.S. military officially ended its war in Iraq, packing a military flag at a ceremony with U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta nearly nine years after the invasion that ousted Saddam Hussein.

Dioceses null appealing FCC closed-captioning exemption revocations

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Ten U.S. dioceses are considering whether to appeal a Federal Communications Commission order lifting the waiver they had earlier been granted that had permitted the dioceses to not use closed-captioning for the programs they produce. Most of the dioceses produce a weekly televised Mass. The deadline to appeal the revocations is Jan. 12. The exemptions were lifted in October. The 10 dioceses were among 303 program-producing entities whose FCC waivers were revoked. Most of the rest are individual Christian congregations that produce their own shows. The Diocese of Lake Charles, La., one of the affected dioceses, said it would seek a new waiver. It does not do a weekly televised Mass but has other programming. Morris LeBlanc, who produces “Glad Tidings,” an hour-long news and interview program that has aired for the past 30 years, told Catholic News Service that to comply with the FCC order, “we feel it would cost us a third more a week, up to a half,” to produce the program. The current costs, according to LeBlanc, are $1,550 in weekly production costs, and $850 each Sunday for the program on a local broadcast network affiliate. Another cost consideration for Lake Charles, LeBlanc said, was the possibility that the station airing “Glad Tidings” will be switching to high-definition broadcasting entirely, which would force the diocese to buy new equipment.

Carthage DVD on marriage not a lobbying effort, campaign board rules

ST. PAUL, Minn. (CNS) — Minnesota’s Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board has dismissed a complaint stemming from a DVD on marriage mailed to 400,000 Catholics in the state by the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis Sept. 29, 2010. The compliant, Minneapolis attorney Kurt M. Anderson, had argued that the mailing constituted a lobbying effort by the archdiocese and therefore triggered certain registration and reporting requirements under Minnesota campaign law. “There is a sufficient basis on which to reasonably conclude that the archdiocese’s communications were for a purpose other than to influence legislative action,” the board said in its 12-page decision, announced Dec. 8. “As a result, there is no probable cause to conclude that the archdiocese became a lobbyist as a result of the subject communications.” The board also found “no probable cause” that the archdiocese should have been required to register as a lobbyist because of its actions. Anderson had contended that the DVD campaign — which took place about six weeks before voters were to elect members of the Minnesota Legislature — was a lobbying effort to get legislators to place a constitutional amendment defining marriage on the state ballot. In the DVD, Archbishop John C. Nienstedt of St. Paul and Minneapolis said, “I have called on the Legislature to allow voters to consider a constitutional amendment to protect marriage as the union between one man and one woman.” The archdiocese believes that the time has come for voters to be presented directly with an amendment to the state constitution to preserve our historic understanding of marriage,” he added.

Archbishop Kelly, retired Louisville archbishop, dead at 80

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (CNS) — Archbishop Thomas C. Kelly, who led the Archdiocese of Louisville from 1983 until his retirement in 2007, died peace- fully in his sleep on the morning of Dec. 14 at his home on the campus of Holy Trinity Church. He was 80. Funeral arrangements were not announced immediately. In a statement released shortly after Archbishop Kelly’s death was announced, his successor, Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz, praised his brother bishop for his service to the archdiocese. “With the death of Archbishop Thomas Cajetan Kelly, the local Church of Louisville has lost a friend, a humble servant and a dedicated man of God,” Archbishop Kurtz said. “Archbishop Kelly served for more than a quarter century as the archbishop of Louisville and remained active as archbishop emeritus for almost five years.” In his 80 years of life, he had been thoroughly a priest of Jesus Christ, as a faithful Dominican, as a diplomat and administrator at the nunciature and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, as Metropolitan of the Province of Louisville, as a true archbishop, and in these last days as a faithful parish priest.” Archbishop Kurtz, possessed of twinkling Irish eyes and a comforting presence, led the archdiocese through periods of both triumph and tragedy. He was proud of the spiritual growth of the archdiocese, especially the Renew process that began in the 1980s shortly after he came to Louisville. He also took pride in the development of a strategic planning process — launched in the 1980s — something he called “a very significant beginning in my time.” The saddest moment of his 25-year leadership of the archdiocese came, he said, with “a terrible time ... when victims came forward for healing and made us realize the terrible, terrible damage that had been done to them. We continue to seek and ask for their forgiveness,” he said in 2007, “to pray that such terrible things may not happen ... again and to take every step conceivable to prevent that from happening.”

News Briefs

MILITARY PRESENCE IN IRAQ

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Luncheon honors donors

FORT WAYNE — Bishop Luers High School’s Development Office invited all donors who contributed to Bishop Luers and students’ Catholic education to the annual We are the Light of the World luncheon on Nov. 30.

During the luncheon, senior Alexandria Clinger shared how blessed she is with the opportunity to attend Bishop Luers.

“Receiving this scholarship means I can continue my education with all the right tools to go on to a great college,” Clinger said. “Having this direction not only means a challenging curriculum but also bringing you spiritually closer to God each and every day.”

Other students shared during the lunch their appreciation for the scholarships or tuition assistance they received.

Freshman Bryce Pollick wrote, “I am so blessed to have received the Msgr. William Lester Scholarship. This scholarship provided the financial help, which my family needed, allowing me to attend Bishop Luers High School. High academic standards are preparing me for college while I continue my Catholic education. Receiving this scholarship was a major stepping-stone in helping me to achieve my future goal of becoming a doctor, and bringing me closer to God. I am forever thankful.”

Catholic conference planned at Notre Dame

NOTRE DAME — Fathers Les Valerio and Kevin Joyce from the Archdiocese in Omaha will present an inspiring, instructive Catholic conference at McKenna Hall at University of Notre Dame the weekend of Jan. 21-22.

The priests have led parish missions, group retreats to religious orders, guided private retreats and spoken at charismatic conferences.

The theme of this conference is, “The Spirit of the Lord is Upon Me.” It will focus on how the Holy Spirit continues to make us into “living stones” through Baptismal graces. There will be five talks: The Prophet Awakened in Me; Prophetic Surrender; Prophetic Prayer; Prophetic Worship; and Prophetic Witness.

The cost for the weekend is $100 with $50 for lunch included. The cost for college students is $50. Priests, seminarians and religious are invited to attend at no cost.

Mass will be celebrated on Saturday morning at Dillon Hall. The priests will concelebrate with the Holy Cross priests at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart on Sunday morning at 10 a.m.

Brochures are available. The registration deadline is Sunday, Jan. 15.

For more information, contact Dave and Jan Torma at fisherofmendis@msn.com or call (574) 291-3381.

Karla Hormann, right, principal at St. Joseph School in Decatur, along with Art Ehinger and Moon Bohlander, light a candle in the school Advent wreath, after reading about Advent during morning announcements.

Winter mini-retreat for young adults

MISHAWAKA — The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend is hosting a mini-retreat for young adults, aged 20s and 30s, single and married, on Sunday, Jan. 15, 1–7 p.m. at the St. Francis Convent, 1515 W. Dragoon Trail, Mishawaka.

The program theme, “Unwrapping Your God-Given Gifts,” will be presented by Lisa Anderson and Holy Cross Father Jim Gallagher.

The event includes Sunday Mass and dinner social.

Advance registration requested, but not required. Suggested donation is $10 for the retreat. Dinner cost is $5 or bring your own.

Registrations may be sent to Sean Allen at salLEN@diocesefwsb.org or (574) 858-354-9006. For more information visit www.diocesefwsb.org/retrEats

Theology on Tap announces 2012 spring series

SOUTH BEND — Theology on Tap, a Catholic speaker series for young adults in their 20s and 30s, single and married, has announced its spring schedule. The series will meet at the Backstage Grill, 222 S. Michigan St., in downtown South Bend, on Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. The schedule is as follow:

- Jan. 24 — “What is Love?” with Dr. John Cavadini
- Jan. 31 — “God’s Love for Us” with Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades
- Feb. 7 — “Our Love for God” with Dr. David Fagerberg
- Feb. 14 — “Our Love for Others” with Dr. Anita Houck
- Feb. 21 — Mardi Gras Party For more information contact Sean Allen at salLEN@diocesefwSB.org or (574) 858-354-9006. The series is presented by the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. Visit www.diocesefwsb.org/tot

First graders sponsor “Cookies for Christ” sale for families in need

FORT WAYNE — It may not seem unusual that St. Joseph-St. Elizabeth School first graders and their families have been busy baking cookies at this time of year. What is unusual is that these first graders and their families bake, bag and sell their annual “Cookies for Christ” to the St. Joseph-St. Elizabeth School community and donate all the money they make to the Sunshine Club. The Sunshine Club is an outreach of both St. Joseph and St. Elizabeth Seton parishes that gives food, clothing, toys and household items to 50-plus families in need at Christmastime.

“Cookies for Christ has become an annual stewardship project for our first graders,” said St. Joseph-St. Elizabeth School Principal Lois Widner. “This project means so much to our community and to our school. What an awesome way for our young people to show their love for others and as a witness for Christ.”

Joanne Kruup, retired St. Joseph-St. Elizabeth School first-grade teacher, came to tell the first graders how she started Cookies for Christ in the mid-1990s. A boy in her first-grade class was using cardboard to hold together an old pair of shoes and was in desperate need for new shoes.

The St. Joseph-St. Elizabeth School first graders sold their cookies for 25 cents each. They sold 2,758 cookies and made $689.50, which was given to the Sunshine Club of St. Joseph and St. Elizabeth Seton parishes to help families in need at Christmastime.

Correction

The Villa of the Woods residents in the Dec. 18, 2011 Today’s Catholic should have been listed as: From left to right: Dale Foltz, Nancy Bartlett, Jeanette McArile and Phil Armstrong.

ST. VINCENT SCHOOL HOLDS FUND DRIVE, PRESENTS CHECK

SOUTH BEND — Saint Joseph High School German students Chris Agostino, a junior, and senior Austin Huntington have been selected as two of the 12 national finalists in the Internationale Deutscholympiade for their overall performance in German.

The International German Olympics are held by the International Association of Teachers of German (IDV), the Goethe-Institut USA and the AATG. The Goethe-Institut Chicago selected the finalists for the International German Olympics. The 12 best U.S. candidates were chosen as a result of a national contest that was held in the middle of November. Agostino and Huntington will travel to Chicago in February to compete on the next level. If they win, they will represent the United States in the world championships in Germany.

Agostino is the son of Peter and Kathleen Agostino and a graduate of Christ the King School in South Bend. Huntington is the son of Dr. Tom Huntington and Cheri Huntington and a graduate of St. Joseph, Mishawaka.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SCHOOL, FORT WAYNE, recently held a fund and toy drive for family members of the National Guard. In the photo, Emily Tippmann, Michael Manning and Tony Turner present a check for $3,000 to Air Guard 122nd Fighter Wing Commander Col. David Augustine, on behalf of the Military Family Services Group. With the check was a Wii Console and accessories.

Correction

The Villa of the Woods residents in the Dec. 18, 2011 Today’s Catholic should have been listed as: From left to right: Dale Foltz, Nancy Bartlett, Jeanette McArile and Phil Armstrong.
Celebrating the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Dec. 12 at St. Joseph Parish in LaGrange, Ignacio Urenda, left, and Ana Karen Garcia, right, act in a play depicting the appearances of the Blessed Virgin Mary to St. Juan Diego in 1531. The play was presented prior to Mass celebrated by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades with the Hispanic community of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.
Former Lutheran pastor now music director in Catholic parish

BY MARK WEBER

FORT WAYNE — As the legatee of a sturdy German Lutheran heritage, growing up in Arlington Heights, Ill., young Allen Goebbert would have found it impossible to believe that for him, the future held a combined career of Lutheran pastorship and as professional organist and choir director, and that as an extreme twist, the late chapters of his life would find him as a Roman Catholic music director.

The early chapters found him in St. Peter’s Lutheran parochial grade school and then Milwaukie’s Concordia High School, a prep school for parochial grade school and his future held a combined career of Lutheran pastorate and. Allen Goebbert would have found it impossible to believe that for him, the future held a combined career of Lutheran pastorship and as professional organist and choir director, and that as an extreme twist, the late chapters of his life would find him as a Roman Catholic music director.

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God’s greatest Gift

The present economic crisis can provide us with an opportunity to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas, rather than on the materialistic spirit that often pervades our Western culture. Since so many people are unemployed or underemployed and many family incomes are shrinking, a lot of people will have to limit the type and number of gifts they give. This might be a blessing in disguise. It can provide us a chance to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas.

Gift giving is a wonderful tradition but too many of us tend to go overboard and often measure another’s love and care by the gifts they give and receive. And some people give gifts out of a feeling of obligation or just because someone gave them one. Many feel embarrassed if a person gives them a gift and they have nothing to give in return. Gift giving is meant to be a sign of one’s love, not an obligation. God showed His love by giving us the greatest gift of all — His Son, Jesus Christ. I heard it put simply in a Christmas homily. The priest said that Christmas is God’s way of showing us how much He loves us. That sums up the message of Christianity.

Whether we recognize it or not, God’s love touches every human being in the world. Without this divine love nothing would exist. God’s love is the glue that keeps the world together and gives us hope.

Material gifts don’t last forever. Many things get lost, broken, joy and hope, usefulness or we get bored with them. On the contrary, God’s love for us never fades. It is everlasting. God is always faithful, good when we are not. God loves us so much that He desires to be with us, morning, noon and night. His care for us is so great that God even became a human being for us. This is what we celebrate at Christmas. Sure, it is always nice to give and receive gifts, but our greatest gift is salvation given by Jesus.

Gift giving is a wonderful opportunity to reach someone in a more open manner. You might want to invite the person to come to Mass with you and pray about it together.

Memories

Reminiscing about Catholic school, Mass, priests or parish activities is another sign. Sometimes people will recall childhood devotions to Our Lady or the saints. Memories of music, incense or some special liturgy may surface. Don’t be afraid to share your memories. You might want to suggest revisiting a childhood parish together or seek out a priest or religious who had a profound impact on the person.

Stressful situations

Illness, death, divorce, the birth of a baby, a job loss or transfer, kids growing into their teens — moving to a new home are all life events that can trigger a desire to return to the Church. Sometimes people are afraid the Church will reject them if they have been gone for a long time. You might find yourself in a position of helping someone get the information about where they stand with God and the Church.

The presence of God

The real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist is often a factor in bringing people back. Ask people to come with you for family funerals, weddings, baptisms, First Communions, Confirmation, Ash Wednesday, May crownings and Mass on Christmas and Easter. It’s hard for people to go to church by themselves. Be an inviting presence. If they don’t want to go to Mass, invite them to pray socially, cultural or educational events. Keep the lines of communication open.

The common denominator

While the circumstances that trigger people’s decision to come back to the Catholic faith may differ, there is one common denominator. In every instance, it is the Holy Spirit working through people, places and things that draws them back. The best thing we can do is allow the Holy Spirit to work through us to touch others.
Unconditional parental love

O

nce I met a woman who had worked for years in fashion and modeling. Unsurprisingly, she was strikingly attractive. She was accompanied by her teenage daughter who, by contrast, was rather unremarkable to look at, maybe even a plain-Jane. After spending time with them, I began to sense that the mother whose life had largely revolved around her appearance, seemed to look down on her daughter, perhaps unconsciously, because of her average appearance. Her daughter seemed aware of this lack of maternal acceptance, and seemed troubled and uncomfortable as she tried to compensate and please her mom in other ways.

The girl’s situation was a strong reminder to me of how important it is for every child to experience unconditional acceptance from their parents if they are to grow and mature in a healthy way. Unconditional love profoundly and beautifully molds us as human beings.

A growing number of parents in our society, however, no longer seem to hold to this key notion of unconditionally accepting their own children. If parents are told by doctors that their children might be born with physical or mental disabilities, many parents today will reject them and even yield to the temptation to end their lives through direct abortion.

I was recently discussing the Special Olympics with the father of a boy who has Down syndrome, and he remarked that when he takes his son to the local chapter, there seem to be reduced numbers of new children participating each year. He wondered if this could be due to the expanded targeting of Down syndrome children through prenatal testing and abortion.

Most unborn children diagnosed with Down syndrome, in fact, are never allowed to be born. Data from the United Kingdom indicate that between 1989 and 2006 approximately 92 percent of women chose to terminate a pregnancy with a prenatal diagnosis of Down syndrome, while in the U.S., several published studies suggest the figure may be somewhere between 87 percent and 98 percent. A great many Down syndrome children, indeed, never see the light of day.

In the face of these harsh data, the importance of explicitly repudiating the egocentric mindset that has taken hold in our society cannot be overstated. No child is perfect, but every child is precious. We need to act as a people “set apart” in our attitude to the begetting of children who may not be disabled. Historically, Catholics have always stood apart in this way. Practically, this means overturning our culturally-conditioned attitudes towards “imperfect” children, and accepting every child without preconditions. We must push back against the almost ubiquitous pressure that counsels us to ensure that our children are born without defects.

Bioethicist Luke Gormally argues it this way: “In part these pressures are the natural temptation to avoid the burdens of care for the handicapped... In part, however, they are the pressures of cultural attitudes, assimilated by many Christians, towards the child.”

He continues: “For many it has become merely quaint to think of each child as a unique gift of God; children are more like planned acquisitions in our culture, acquisitions which should fit into our expectations about how our lives should go, about the ease and enjoyments that should characterize our lifestyle. A child who might threaten our old relationships. Or we can do that charitabe act that we often think about but never seem to get around to carrying out. Let us live out our good intentions. Other things we might do are to visit or call people we know who are lonely and need some comfort. We might offer to babysit for a young couple that rarely gets time alone. These little kindnesses are often appreciated more than another bottle of perfume or shaving lotion.

Gift giving is okay as long as it doesn’t get in the way of the reason for this season. And parents, teach your children the true meaning of Christmas. Let them know that your love for them is not measured by what is under the tree.
St. Patrick classmates meet, survive WWII

BY MARK WEBER

For two young lads who were graduated from Fort Wayne's St. Patrick's grade school in 1937, there was a lazy summer ahead and then the excitement of being together again in Catholic high school. Neither could know that their subsequent graduation would send them not to college but straight into the army and the opening chapter of World War II where they would have a dramatic reunion in the shadow of the bridge at Nijmegen as part of the infamous Operation Market Garden. Bob Heiny was from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, Fort Wayne, and his lifelong friend, Bob Gorman, St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Fort Wayne, have shared enough experiences in their 89 years to be twins, beginning with eight years of grade school at St. Patrick, then high school, first at the Holy Cross Brothers School, and as second semester sophomores in the brand new Central Catholic High School, graduates in the class of '41. World War II separated the close chums, although they still had something in common. They were both in the U. S. Army and kept in touch by mail.

Both men belonged to units in the European theater, and as the war drew to a close, both were involved in the dangerous gamble to advance Allied forces into Germany at the Rhine River. Bob Heiny got there first. His outfit, the 656th Tank Destroyer outfit was the first to cross the Rhine. St. Heiny knew from their correspondence that Bob Gorman was close by with the 203 Anti Aircraft, assigned to protect a pontoon bridge and the main bridge. Gorman was living in a bombarded out hotel and it was there that the two battle weary Hoosiers had a brandy-laced reunion matching the surrounding bombardment.

The St. Pat's buddies survived the war without a scratch and resumed life together as roommates at Xavier University. Bob Heiny returned to the Heiny Grocery firm with his brothers and then the Sealtest Ice Cream company. Bob Gorman retired from General Electric and their shared experience was to be a lifetime memory. Twenty seven years ago, Gorman persuaded Heiny to join him as a volunteer two days a week at St. Mary's Soup Kitchen.

And that's where the present finds the two who served Mass at St. Patrick, who went through life, thick and thin, war and peace, now serving Christ by serving others.

Sacred Heart Parish
Notre Dame, Indiana

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE IN CRYPT

Saturday, December 24, Christmas Eve: 6:30 pm Family Mass
Sunday, December 25, Christmas Day: 6:30, 9:00 & 11:00 am Masses
Sunday, January 1, Mary, Mother of God: 6:30, 9:00 & 11:00 am Masses
Sunday, January 8, 2012, Epiphany of the Lord: 6:30 am Crypt Mass (This is the Only Crypt Mass this day!)
11:30 am Parish Mass in the Basilica with the Three Kings

Visit Diocesefwbs.org for Mass times at all parishes

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

viola lessons at school and gave himself private lessons on the piano at home. Radio broadcasts of classical and organ music were favorites, and a benchmark experience occurred when day by day, he watched a new pipe organ being installed at his home parish, and as a boy, was invited to play it; and when he touched those keys and heard what came out of the pipes, it became a moment of destiny.

Included with organ and piano lessons in high school, his voice training began as he sang in a high-school choir and the Milwaukee Accapella Choir, and later in seminary days in St. Louis, he sang in the St. Louis Bach Society and the choir of Concordia Seminary.

Goebbert married while he was a seminarian in St. Louis, but his wife, Mary, was not Lutheran; she was a Methodist.

Mary was from Geneva, Ind., and her mother was a Catholic with a rather fragile connection to St. Mary of the Presentation Parish. Through this linking, Mary had vague memories of visits to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne for midnight Mass and Easter Mass at St. Mary of the Presentation.

Goebbert’s first call as a pastor came from a rural parish near Beemer, Neb., and he and Mary went there, amongst corn and cattle, to serve the faithful of Zion St. John’s Parish.

His next assignment was to his home parish in Arlington Heights, Ill., where he was minister of music, directing the choir and a hand-bell choir, and playing the organ.

Goebbert and his wife then went to Wichita, Kan., and began to raise a family of six. Although he was a pastor in Wichita, he became heavily involved in musical activities in the area; singing in the Wichita chorus, taking organist performance classes, and freelancing as an organist and choir director in various churches in Wichita.

After 12 years in Wichita, the Goebberts moved to Huntington in 1994 to serve at St. Peter’s Lutheran Church.

Goebbert’s work continues to put him in other churches. He is the organist, choirmaster and office manager for the Salem United Church of Christ in Fort Wayne.

Through the network of musicians, Goebbert was told that Judy Thom, music director for the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, was looking for someone to play the organ for Midnight Mass. Goebbert got the assignment and it turned out to be an extremely uplifting experience for their entire family.

Several months went by, and the warmth and comfort of the Christmas Mass lasted for Mary, who suddenly suggested that they attend Mass at Sts. Peter and Paul Parish in Huntington.

The warmth of the reception received there, plus the engaging understanding of Capuchin Father Ron Rieder, left no doubt that their spiritual journey now had clear directions, and Goebbert and Mary made the decision to complete the RCLA process as candidates and to be received into the Catholic faith in the spring of 2009.

Goebbert’s work continues to put him in other churches. He is the organist, choirmaster and office manager for the Salem United Church of Christ in Fort Wayne.

This past summer, however, he saw an ad in Today’s Catholic newspaper for a part-time job as music director at St. Therese Catholic Church in Fort Wayne.

He applied for that position, was hired by Spiritual Father Lawrence Teteh and finds the experience as a total fulfillment of all the assignments he has had in the Lord’s vineyard.
Sports

BISHOT DWENGER OFFERS 2012 SAINTS BASKETBALL CAMP All future Saints in grades K-8 are invited to participate in the 2012 Saints Basketball Camp being held in the Bishop Dwenger main gym on the following Saturdays: Jan. 7, 14, 21, and Feb. 4. Camp participants will learn the fundamentals of basketball such as dribbling, passing and shooting, with an emphasis on fair play and sportsmanship. The entire four-Saturday series is only $40 (T-shirt included). Registrations are due by Jan. 5, 2012 or camp participants may register on the first day of the camp. Call (260) 496-4700 with additional questions.

SAINT JOSEPH’S HIGH SCHOOL RECEIVES SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD

SOUTH BEND — The Indiana High School Athletic Association has awarded Saint Joseph’s High School a newly-installed recognition — the IHSAA Program Sportsmanship Award. Scholarship, sportsmanship and citizenship are the cornerstones of this award.

The IHSAA is offering all Indiana high schools the opportunity to win the IHSAA School Sportsmanship Award, an annual presentation, which will include a championship banner for the school to be hung in the gym.

Award coordinators noted, “Sportsmanship, quite simply, translates to lessons in citizenship for the 160,000 young men and women who participate in high school sports in Indiana. Your enthusiastic participation in the IHSAA program will help counter possible negative influences that exist in our society in regards to sportsmanship. More importantly, it will help set a positive example for others to follow. We encourage and thank you for your school’s full support of this program.”

In addition to having a written sportsmanship plan in place, the following criteria must be met:

• A winning school cannot have a coach ejected from a game because of a sportsmanship violation during the school year.

• A winning school cannot have a player ejected from a game because of a sportsmanship violation during the school year.

• A winning school cannot have a corroborated report about unsportsmanlike fan behavior filed by a licensed IHSAA official.

• A winning school cannot have an IHSAA rules violation.

This is an award that reflects the character and respect displayed by all involved in the Saint Joseph’s sports programs — coaches, players, students, parents, faculty and staff.

CYO TWINS GET THEIR FIRST WIN OF THE SEASON

BY MICHIELE CASTLEMAN

FORT WAYNE — Catholic Youth League (CYO) hoop players got in their final week of regular season play for 2011 over the weekend, and the St. Rose-St. Louis boys got their first win with a victory over the Huntington Catholic Rams.

Paul Gerardot returns to coach the Twins and has doubled his duties this season also heading up the junior-varsity team. He lists nine players on his combined seventh- and eighth-grade roster and feels his team plays with a lot of desire. “These boys really love the game of basketball. They are an enthusiastic bunch and work extremely hard,” he said. “I can truly say the eighth graders have come a long way since seventh grade. They are hungry to learn the game, love practice and don’t even mind running the steps at St. Henry.”

The Twins are 1-0 in conference play and have a 1-2 overall record early on. St. Rose-St. Louis will see some action on the court in a feeder school tournament over the Christmas break and return to conference play in January.

“I am hoping we will peak by the end of the season and stay healthy this year,” concluded Gerardot.

LADY COUGARS NAMED TO NAIA SCHOLAR-ATHLETE TEAM

FORT WAYNE — Four members of the 2011 University of Saint Francis women’s soccer team have been named to the 2011 NAIA Scholar-Athlete team.

Student-athletes are nominated by their institution’s head coach and must maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale and must have achieved a junior academic status in order qualify for the honor.

The USF selections included senior midfielder Angie Carusone, senior defender Michelle Domenick, goalkeeper Ashley Holt and junior midfielder Emma Charais, who is also a Bishop Luers High School graduate.

FOURTH ANNUAL EASTERN MAINE WINTER CATHOLIC LITURGY

November 30, 2011

THE EASTERN MAINE CATHOLIC LITURGY has been a great success the past three years in the Bangor area. Many parishes have been able to benefit from this service.

The Eastern Maine Catholic Liturgy is being held on December 31st at Our Lady of Peace Church in Bangor.

If you would like to assist in the Eastern Maine Catholic Liturgy on December 31st please contact the Reverend Father Joseph G. Landry at 207-863-8991.

A L I V E L Y T O DAY ’ S C A T H O L I C
“Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows” (Warner Bros.)

Sprawling, brawling adventure sequel — set in 1891 — in which Robert Downey Jr.’s he-man Holmes and his recently wed sidekick Dr. Watson (Jude Law) battle a conspiracy by evil genius Professor Moriarty (Jared Harris) to destabilize European politics and bring on a general war. The iconic pair is aided in their struggle by a Gypsy fortuneteller (Noomi Rapace) and by Holmes’ bon vivant older brother (Stephen Fry). Director Guy Ritchie’s second take on the classic detective fiction of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle downplays old-fashioned sleuthing in favor of a constant flow of confrontations, escapades and escapes. Still, adults with a high degree of tolerance for stylized violence will likely find the proceedings diverting enough.

Constant action violence, including a suicide, torture and some glimpses of gore; partial rear and implied full nudity; fleeting sexual humor; and a few crass terms. The Catholic News Service classification is A-III — adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 — parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

Regardless of the weather or the food served at a holiday feast, or whether you are alone or in the midst of many, Christmas is always a look at the past. At the Catholic Cemetery of Fort Wayne, we deal with time in a unique blend of the past, the present and the future for all whom we are called to serve.

May the Blessings of the season be yours.
Discover the facts about FACTS tuition program, Indiana School Choice program, available online. The Bell Choir will also feature Mary Lou McCarthy-Arzt as director/organist.

Christmas concert at Precious Blood Fort Wayne — Most Precious Blood Church, with Jim Didier, choir director, and Kathy Schall, bell choir director, will present a Christmas concert Monday, Dec. 26, at 7 p.m. in the church. Admission is free.

St. Pius X senior group Granger — St. Pius X has a senior group (55 plus) that meets the second Tuesday of the month at noon starting with Mass. On Jan. 10, the price is $3. For information call (574) 271-7853.

Sunday breakfast at St. Pius X Granger — The Knights of Columbus Council 4263 will have a breakfast Sunday, Jan. 8, from 9 a.m. to noon at St. Pius X. Adults $6, children 6-12 $3.

Little Flower Holy Hour Fort Wayne — Father Terrance Coonan will celebrate the Little Flower Holy Hour at St. Mother Theodore Guérin Chapel on Tuesday, Jan. 3, at 7 p.m. to pray for priests and vocations. Father Coonan is parochial vicar at St. Pius X.

DONATIONS Mustard Seed Furniture Bank can use your donations Fort Wayne — The Mustard Seed Furniture Bank accepts donations of bedroom and living room furniture, tables, chairs, bed linens and towels. Items must be in working order. Donations may be picked up by calling (260) 471-5802.

St. Vincent de Paul Store always in need Fort Wayne — Donations are always accepted for cars, trucks and vans. Donations are tax deductible. Call (260) 456-3561 for pick up or drop off at the store, 1800 S. Calhoun St. 

Food donations needed South Bend — The St. Vincent de Paul Society is in need of food items to restock the warehouse. Drop off at a retail location: 3408 Ardmore Trail or SR 23 and Ironwood at Greenwood Plaza. Contact Dale at (574) 234-6000, ext. 12109, for information.

Bishop Luers High School

New Family Financial Aid Information Meeting

Discover the facts about FACTS tuition program, Indiana School Choice program, available scholarships and deadlines for financial aid.

Wednesday, January 11, 6:30 P.M. Media Center

Freshman Registration Jan. 18-19, 6:30-8:30 P.M.
ELKHART — Following the example of the church’s patron — St. Vincent de Paul in Elkhart has a Christmas Giving Program to help those in need. St. Vincent de Paul’s pastor, Father Glenn Kohrman explained, “We solicit people who need help and then solicit people who are able to help.”

Parishioner Louanne Stephens is the coordinator of the program. Stephens said she began the program nine years ago, the first year she came to the parish. “I was in a CRHP (Christ Renews His Parish) group and I saw a need — a definite need,” she said.

She asked the pastor at the time for his approval and he gave it. But she only had a month to pull it all together. She said the first year they assisted 25 people, last year around 600. Stephens said she puts out slips of paper — half in English, half in Spanish — stating, “I need help or I know someone who needs help” and on the bottom it states, “I would love to help a family in need.”

Stephens said her system starts by getting names, ages, gender and the need of those in need. Once she has four she moves on to those who want to help and finds out if they want to take care of an entire family or just one of the members. Sometimes donors will just give money and have her purchase the items.

“Sometimes we just have them buy SCRIP, because at times if it’s an older person they have to choose between food and medicine and we give them SCRIP,” she said.

Many stories

Stephens has many stories to share of experiences over the years. Once she had a woman who had a breast removed and requested a special undergarment. Another year someone with cancer needed a wig and she made 30 calls to get the wig donated.

One person kept telling her “I don’t like Christmas!” and Stephens replied, “That’s fine, but do you want to donate a wig?” It took some arguing back and forth, but finally the wig was donated.

One year a teenager put out a request through the Internet and brought in so many donations the family needed a truck to take them home. Stephens said that family shared the surplus with their neighbors.

“One year a girl asked for a coat and I thought, ‘She really needs that coat.'” So rather than wait until pick-up day, she arranged to meet the girl and her mother at the church one morning.

“She showed up with a kitchen towel on her head for a hat, three sweaters for a coat and socks on her hands for mittens. It snowed that day so she really needed the coat and the mom was so thankful because she needed her towel back to dry dishes,” said Stephens.

God’s Providence

Stephens said every year there are examples of God’s providence in how things just work out. Like the time someone came walking in with a Christmas tree asking, “Can you use this?” right after a family asked for one.

This year a family who’d lost everything needed a twin bed frame, and a business called saying they had a twin bed frame to donate. Another time a teenager who loved basketball was overjoyed when someone came in after a Christmas party with a brand new electronic basketball game to donate.

There is a set of railroad tracks by the church in Elkhart and Stephens shared that their priest suggested rather than be frustrated while waiting for trains, to say a prayer. Once while waiting for a train, Stephens noticed some homeless women nearby. So while waiting at the tracks she gave out three coats from the back of her vehicle.

Another time late donations came in with just the perfect-sized jackets for children that were there in need.

“No one can tell me God doesn’t run this — it’s too perfect,” she said.

Sometimes children call in asking for help for their families. Last year a boy called in asking for help for his sisters, mom and dad.

“What about you? You’re part of the family, aren’t you?” Stephens asked him. He said he didn’t need anything. So little by little she got the information out of him she needed to supply him with some Christmas gifts as well.

A family who was helped last year is holding a raffle this year to raise funds to help another family.

“That’s how it’s supposed to be, we help them and then they help others,” Stephens said.

One woman told Stephens, “You’re the only group that really cared about me so I want to help.”

Stephens said her phone starts ringing in October.

Father Kohrman said, “Stephens puts in well over 100 hours matching families. It’s amazing what she does — it truly is a saintly effort on her part.”

Stephens said sometimes she’s asked, “How do you know for sure if these are the ones that need help?” Her reply is, “We’re leaving it in God’s hands. We’re truly working with the grace of God.”

When asked if things are better this year both the pastor and Stephens said unfortunately they’re not. Last year they were able to help 125 families. This year they have 77 families.

“It’s not that the need is less but that people able to help is less. We’ve had to turn some people away,” Father Glenn said. “Unfortunately it’s hard on both ends,” Stephens said. “But we’ll do it right up till the last minute — if we have extra we’ll call someone to come get it.”

She said the priests of the parish also take on families. “The priests have been very supportive — calls come in to them that they have to pass on to me. If the priests weren’t supportive, it wouldn’t work,” she said. “It’s a good church, I’m happy to be a part of it.”

The St. Vincent de Paul Parish seventh- and eighth-grade youth group, the Edge, led by Lindsay Klinker, recently witnessed a Living Nativity including a live donkey, at the church in Fort Wayne. The event, that had the participants visiting five stations that included the inn, the shepherds, the Bethlehem marketplace, the Magi and King Herod, drew close to 150 youth from the parish.

Saint Anne Home and Retirement Community

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ST. VINCENT DE PAUL HOSTS LIVING NATIVITY FOR YOUTH GROUP

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