St. Patrick community celebrates Our Lady

BY KAY COZAD

FORT WAYNE — St. Patrick Parish in Fort Wayne was at capacity with standing room only for the hundreds of Hispanic parishioners and friends who came to Mass on the second Sunday in Advent and to celebrate Our Lady, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades was the celebrant. The thrust of the celebration was to celebrate Our Lady of Guadalupe, the patroness of the Americas. Although Dec. 9 this year falls on the Second Sunday of Advent, Dec. 9 is also the feast of St. Juan Diego, an indigenous Native American from Mexico who was visited by the Blessed Mother now known as Our Lady of Guadalupe in 1531.

December 9 is very special to Bishop Rhoades. On Dec. 9, 2004, he was ordained the bishop of the Diocese of Harrisburg, Pa.

Colorful flags representing the countries of the American continents marked the entrance procession of the Mass. A larger-than-life framed portrayal of Our Lady of Guadalupe, which was incensed by the bishop during Mass, stood near the altar. Aztec and Ecuadorian dancers commanded the aisles, brightly dressed in colorful cultural costumes replete with feathered and jeweled headdresses.

During his homily, which he spoke in Spanish, Bishop Rhoades stressed that Christ not only came for all 2,000 years ago, but comes to us in the present day.

Aide Carranza, left, and Arly Espinoza, right, present the offertory gifts to Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades at Mass on Sunday, Dec. 9, at St. Patrick Parish in Fort Wayne.

All Catholics under ‘obligation of love,’ says Indianapolis archbishop

BY SEAN GALLAGHER

INDIANAPOLIS (CNS) — In the ancient Mediterranean world and in medieval Europe, a chair was the symbol of a teacher. In those cultures, teachers sat in chairs and their students sat at their feet to learn from them.

The Catholic Church continues this traditional symbol in the cathedra, the seat of a diocesan bishop in a local Church’s cathedral.

When Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin sat for the first time in the cathedra at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis on Dec. 3, he did so to teach Catholics of central and southern Indiana how to love and respond to Christ’s love for them.

In his homily during the Mass in which he was installed as the sixth shepherd of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Archbishop Tobin reflected on how St. Paul saw himself as obligated to preach the Gospel because Christ loved him first.

“And so, for us Catholics of central and southern Indiana, if someone asks us, ‘Why do you do what you do?’ it’s not simply because we’re obeying rules,” Archbishop Tobin said. “In fact, on at least four different occasions, I heard Pope Benedict XVI say that the Gospel cannot be presented first and foremost as a list of moral obligations.

“It is rather an encounter with a person, someone who has loved us first and someone who asks us to continue His loving presence in the world. And so all of us who belong to this particular Church are under an obligation — the obligation of love.”

Archbishop Tobin said that he and all the Catholics of the archdiocese are to express that love with the passion that characterized our patron saint, Francis Xavier, and that we will do whatever the Lord asks us to do in bringing the good news, especially to those who have the least chance of hearing it, for those who live on the margin of things, for those who have been hurt by the Church, for those who feel themselves to be forgotten.

The archbishop, former secretary of the Vatican Congregation for Institutes of
We heard in last Sunday’s Gospel that “the word of God came to John in the desert.” Saint John the Baptist proclaimed a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins throughout the whole region of the Jordan. He lived and preached in the Judean desert, calling people to turn back to the One who gives us life, and life in abundance. There is the desert of God’s darkness, the emptiness of souls no longer aware of their dignity, of loneliness, of destroyed love. There are so many kinds of desert. The desert of poverty, the desert of absence of a Savior. Our world needs a Savior. Jesus Christ is our Savior. The very name Mary and Joseph gave their son, at the invitation of God, who sent His Son to us as our Savior. We all need a Savior. Our world needs a Savior.

We had to celebrate and rejoice. This brother of yours was lost and is found. One of the joys of being a priest is hearing the season of Advent, the time of anticipation and hope before Christmas. And that joy also brings peace to our lives. Whenever we do God’s will, we will possess inner joy and peace, even in the midst of adversity. We are called to share that joy and peace with others, especially through our love for them. The joy of Christmas is alive in us when we live our faith in charity. Christian joy springs from love, love of God and love of neighbor. As we approach Christmas, let us remember that God became man that we might have life and have it to the full. The Son of God took on our human nature to save us from sin and death. At Christmas, we will hear again the words of the angel to the shepherds: For today in the city of David a Savior has been born for you who is Christ and Lord. This is the reason for our joy, the true joy of Christmas!
Pope makes new rules to strengthen charities’ Catholic identity

BY FRANCIS X. ROCCA

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Warning that Catholic charitable activity must not become “just another form of organized social assistance,” Pope Benedict XVI issued new rules to strengthen the religious identity of Catholic charities and ensure that their activities conform to Church teaching.

The pope’s apostolic letter on the “service of charity,” issued “motu proprio” (on his own initiative), directs bishops in overseeing charitable works in their dioceses. The document, dated Nov. 11, was released by the Vatican Dec. 1.

Charities approved by the Church or supported by Church funds “are required to follow Catholic principles in their activity and they may not accept commitments which could in any way affect the observance of those principles,” the pope wrote.

The staff members of such charities “must therefore, share, or at least respect, the Catholic identity” of their agencies, and exemplify “Christian life” and faith. Bishops and their diocesan officials are charged with “theological and pastoral formation” through special courses and “suitable aids to the spiritual life.”

“Catholic charities are called and chosen to receive financial support from groups or institutions that pursue ends contrary to the Church’s teaching,” or “to accept contributions for initiatives whose ends, or the means used to pursue them, are not in conformity with the Church’s teaching.”

To ensure that the Church’s charitable agencies reflect “Christian simplicity of life,” each bishop is to set their salaries and expenses at levels “in due proportion to analogous expenses of his diocesan curia.”

“When the activity of a particular charitable agency is no longer being carried out in conformity with the Church’s teaching,” Pope Benedict wrote, the responsible bishop must inform his flock and “prohibit that agency from using the name ‘Catholic.’”

The document is the Vatican’s latest measure aimed at reinforcing Catholic identity of Catholic institutions. In May 2012, the Vatican issued rules strengthening its control over Caritas Internationalis, a confederation of 164 Catholic relief, development and social service agencies around the world, including Catholic Relief Services in the United States.

In the apostolic letter, the pope praised Caritas for its “generous and consistent witness of faith and its concrete ability to respond to the needs of the poor.”

The central ritual of the installation Mass was Archbishop Tobin taking his place in the cathedra, then representatives of various groups in archdiocese came up to greet him. “The quiet silence is shown to us at this time by all those,” the pope said. “The quiet silence is shown to us at this time by the one who is being introduced to us.”

Standing before a statue of Mary in St. Peter’s Square, then — riding in a brand new, Mercedes-Benz M-class popemobile — went to the Church’s Spanish Steps late afternoon Dec. 8, the feast of the Immaculate Conception.

That Mary was conceived without sin “speaks to us of joy, that authentic joy that spreads in a heart freed from sin,” the pope said, sitting before a column topped with a statue of Mary erected in honor of the Immaculate Conception.

“That Mary was conceived without sin speaks to us of joy, that authentic joy that spreads in a heart freed from sin,” the pope said. “And I ask you, brothers and sisters, to renounce certain habits of inhibiting our spirituality, which harms them and others.”

The pope prayed that through the intercession of Mary, God would “grant us the grace to reject sin and persevere in the grace of baptism.”

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, an Indiana native, who was named auxiliary bishop for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend Jan. 3, 1970.

Before the start of Mass, more than a hundred priests and two dozen bishops processed into SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, which was filled with 1,000 worshipers. Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano, apostolic nuncio to the United States, was the principal celebrant.

The central ritual of the installation Mass was Archbishop Tobin taking his place in the cathedra, then representatives of various groups in archdiocese came up to greet him. They included a priest, a deacon and his wife, religious, a married couple, youths and young adults, representatives of the Hispanic community and people with special needs.

Also greeting Archbishop Tobin were a representative of the Indianapolis-based Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), an imam, a rabbi and various civic officials, including Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard, who is Catholic.

At the conclusion of the Mass, Archbishop Tobin thanked Pope Benedict, who appointed him to Indianapolis Oct. 18, and Archbishop Buechlein and Auxiliary Bishop Christopher J. Coyne, other archdiocesan leaders and the Catholics of central and southern Indiana who have been praying for a new archbishop for months now.

“I thank you for those prayers,” Archbishop Tobin said. “And I ask that they continue.”

He also thanked his mother, Marie Tobin, and his 12 siblings. Archbishop Tobin then thanked his Redemptorist family. He first professed vows in 1973 in the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, whose members are called Redemptorists.

He was the congregation’s superior general of the congregation, whose 5,300 members minister in 78 countries, from 1997 to 2009.

“My brothers here know the full story,” he said. “I trust that they’re not going to tell it,” said Archbishop Tobin with a smile. “I thank you for teaching me to love the poor, and to assure that the Gospel is preached in season and out.”

Finally, Archbishop Tobin noted that, while he could not predict what would happen in this great adventure of being the archbishop of Indianapolis. “Whatever the Lord holds for me, that’s fine,” he said. “But I’m sure that I’m going to enjoy life with you, my brothers and sisters.”

Sean Gallagher is a reporter at The Criterion, newspaper of the Indianapolis Archdiocese.
Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
1100 South Calhoun Street - Fort Wayne

Christmas Eve Masses:
5:00 PM (Children’s Mass)
Midnight Mass
(Music begins at 11:30 PM)

Christmas Day Masses
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The faithful of the Hispanic community process from St. Patrick Church to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne carrying a statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe and St. Juan Diego while praying the rosary and joining in song.

St. Patrick, Fort Wayne, parishioners presented Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades with a statue depicting the appearance of Our Lady of Guadalupe to Juan Diego. The statue was presented at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception following the procession.

Joe Romie contributed to this story.

He reminded all that Advent is a time for conversion and repentance — like that preached by John the Baptist — adding, “I can not think of a better way to prepare ourselves for Christmas than Confession.”

At the conclusion of the Mass, in which five local priests con-celebrated, St. Patrick pastor Father Andrew Thu Pham and Bishop Rhoades gave thanks to all who had participated in the organization of the beautiful Mass. Following resounding applause for Bishop Rhoades as he was recognized for his ordination as bishop, the dancers took to the aisles for the recessional of the Mass celebration.

The congregation processed onto the streets reciting the rosary as they made their way to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception and raising their voices in song. The procession, led by Provincial of the Society of the Divine Word Father Thomas Ascheman and Father Thu Pham, formed around a beautifully-carved wooden statue depicting the appearance of Our Lady of Guadalupe to St. Juan Diego. The statue was borne on a litter by several men with one holding an umbrella over it in the rain.

The statue was brought to Fort Wayne from Texas and donated by the Martinez family as a gift for Bishop Rhoades on his episcopal anniversary. A personalized plaque at the base of the statue reads: “The community of St. Patrick, Fort Wayne, presents this statue to our Bishop Kevin Rhoades. May Our Lady of Guadalupe always protect you with her mantle.”

Dancers braved the elements as the procession reached the cathedral plaza where they performed to rhythmic drum music. Those in procession entered the cathedral with the statue where they sang songs as they awaited the arrival of Bishop Rhoades.

The bishop welcomed the congregation in Spanish to the cathedral, which he called their home, too. The statue was presented to the bishop in the sanctuary of the cathedral where he thanked the congregation for the stunning gift before praying over and blessing the statue with holy water.

Following the blessing all were invited to process back to St. Patrick Church for a fiesta.
USF’s ‘Formula for Life’ changing world of Haitian orphanage

By Vince L. Labarbera

FORT WAYNE — The headlines read, “Deadly Hurricane Katrina strikes Haiti, Gulf region” in 2005 and “Port-au-Prince, capital, largest city, struck by catastrophic earthquake” in 2010. The aftermath of all that devastation is still being felt by tens of thousands of citizens of that poor Caribbean country.

One particular location called Robillard, Haiti, located in a rural area about a six-hour drive north of Port-au-Prince, holds a special place in the hearts of many University of Saint Francis students in Fort Wayne and their faculty advisor, Dr. Amy Obringer. That’s because it’s the rented home of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Orphanage and its beloved founder, Father Andre Sylvestre.

The small orphanage is housed in a modest ranch-style home with 27 children, three “moms” and a male guardian all living under one roof. The children sleep in double bunk beds and each bedroom is at full capacity. There’s no room for any more orphans. (The moms do not cook or clean, but are hired by Father Andre to give love and compassion, and sit with the children.)

“We feel ‘called’ to help this orphanage,” said Obringer. Two students have traveled there twice at their own expense, given a number of presentations and held fundraisers, she related. “For the past two years, we’ve been Father Andre’s most consistent and main supporter.”

Campaign to raise funds

Currently, a fall campaign is underway to raise $50,000 by Feb. 1, 2013, for a new orphanage on 15 acres of land owned by Father Andre to house 40 children. It’s the first phase of the diocesan priest’s dream for a long-term orphanage complex providing a home for more than 100 orphans along with a vocational school, library, health clinic, chapel, adult literacy center, community room and a home for a congregation of sisters who eventually would manage the orphanage after Father Andre is gone.

The new orphanage would be a place “where the orphans can have the privilege to feel loved, to have access to education and healthcare, to hear the Good News of the Gospel, to learn how to shape their own destiny,” said Father Andre. “In short, I would like to give them a safe place where they can develop all the dimensions of their lives,” he said.

“Pre-school teachers are hired to teach the children in the garage area of the home,” said Rachael Bornhorst, a junior at USF. “The older children are driven to and from school, library, health clinic, chapel, adult literacy center, community room and a home for a congregation of sisters who eventually would manage the orphanage after Father Andre is gone.”

The children and staff of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Orphanage include at right, its founder, Father Andre Sylvestre, and three “moms” (standing). Visiting the orphanage last May were Dr. Amy Obringer (center), Rachael Bornhorst (left) and Amanda Pedro (right).

“The children and staff of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Orphanage include at right, its founder, Father Andre Sylvestre, and three “moms” (standing). Visiting the orphanage last May were Dr. Amy Obringer (center), Rachael Bornhorst (left) and Amanda Pedro (right). We arrived with suitcases filled with canned foods, powdered vitamins and infant formula,” Obringer said, “and money for drilling a well for clean water.” The student-led project has become the orphanage’s financial mainstay in terms of nutritional funds. Shepard, a 2009 USF graduate and currently enrolled in her second year as a Chicago osteopathic medicine student, returns annually to start the 5K walk/run. The next Formula for Life event will be April 14, 2013. Formula for Life will continue to provide funding for nutritional support for the orphanage until it reaches its goal of self-sufficiency. This fall’s campaign is to raise money strictly for the new orphanage.

Father Andre’s ministries

Obringer said, “To give you an idea of how amazing Father Andre is, he probably is in his middle 60’s, and he does a lot of marital counseling, saying ‘thank you’ and praying. And if readers would like to follow it on Facebook, search Formula for Life Facebook. “All the kids are extremely cute and it melts your heart when you see them,” said Bornhorst. “I would love to spend more than 10 days with them, maybe on the medical side where I could help provide for their medical needs.”

“Since it’s been difficult to find contacts in the Dominican and with the awareness of Haiti and Father Andre, Formula for Life now dedicates nearly all of its fundraising efforts to Our Lady of Perpetual Help Orphanage,” Obringer explained. This year’s event drew 400 registrations and raised more than $11,000.

On her last visit to Haiti, USF junior Rachel Bornhorst holds three-year-old Snidee Christie Vilmar. Her parents died, her grandmother tried to care for Christie but did not have the means and her aunt did not want to care for her. An uncle took her away and gave Christie to Father Andre’s orphanage.

Origins of formula for life

But let’s start at the beginning with Cortney Shepard, a biology major who returned from a medical mission trip to the Dominican Republic in 2007. While there she cared for a young mother whose infant was starving because the mother could only afford to feed the child two crackers a day. Upon her return, Shepard told Obringer she was struggling to resume her “comfortable life with everything she needs” knowing there are babies starving. Obringer asked, “Why don’t you do something about it?” Shepard founded what she called “Formula for Life” at USF — a 5K walk/run and silent auction to raise funds.

“Since it’s been difficult to find contacts in the Dominican and with the awareness of Haiti and Father Andre, Formula for Life now dedicates nearly all of its fundraising efforts to Our Lady of Perpetual Help Orphanage,” Obringer explained. This year’s event drew 400 registrations and raised more than $11,000.

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VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Advenit’s liturgical preparation for Christmas calls Christians to renew their faith in the reality of God’s great love and to make a commitment to bringing His law into the lives of others. The pope said.

Advent is time to renew faith, bring God’s love to others, pope says.

The University of Notre Dame “endorses the emphatic teaching on homosexuality. The university ‘endorses the emphatic teaching on homosexuality. The university of Notre Dame in its pastoral teaching concerning homosexual actions, that ‘homosexual persons are called to live in a chaste and loving manner and should cultivate the virtues of self-mastery that teach them inner freedom.’” — The Observer.

The first one was consultation with Church teaching,” she told Catholic News Agency. “The second one was consultation with theologians,” she said. “The third element was a look at ‘the breadth of structures’ other Catholic institutions have in place.”

The plan’s implementation calls for several actions, including:

• Training of student leaders and staff and faculty, and the education of all students, “so as to create a fruitful and supportive environment for all members of the Notre Dame community.”

• Support for ‘out or questioning’ students and staff, as well as notional and spiritual initiatives coming from multiple units on campus, such as the Gender Relations Center, campus ministry and the Institute for Catholic Life, and also support for those who identify as LGBTQ.

• Opportunities intended to assist all members of the Notre Dame community “in their ongoing exploration of and conversation concerning a Catholic understanding of sexual intimacy and the calls to chastity and holiness of life.”

The Golden Dome with its statue of Mary is seen in a 2003 file photo atop the administration building of the University of Notre Dame in Notre Dame, Ind. (AP Photo/Robert Duvall)

Notre Dame pastoral plan affirms Church teaching

The University of Notre Dame released a pastoral plan titled “Beloved Friends and Allies: A Pastoral Plan for the Support and Encouragement of Catholic Students, Faculty, Staff, and Religious Sisters and Brothers who are Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender.”

The university’s pastoral plan affirms Church teaching that “homosexual persons are called to live in a chaste and loving manner and should cultivate the virtues of self-mastery that teach them inner freedom.”

“Today it is particularly important to clarify the criteria which make it possible to distinguish between authentic and false ‘sensus fidei’ from its counterfeit,” the pope said.

“I am truly concerned about the teaching of the magisterium because the ‘sensus fidei’ cannot develop authentically in a believer except to the extent in which he or she fully participates in the life of the Church, and this requires a responsible adherence to the magisterium.”

Notre Dame pastoral plan affirms Church teaching
A series of activities will begin in spring semester 2013 and continue through 2014. These will include speakers who address vocation as it relates to college students in the decision-making process; two summer workshops to train faculty and staff members to assist students in the discernment process; student discussion groups and retreats including small group discussions on discernment; and the use of videos, print resources, digital and print subscriptions, group activities and other materials to stimulate understanding of the subject.

“In its general sense, a ‘vocation’ is a call to radical faithfulness, a commitment of oneself in one’s totality,” said USF School of Arts and Sciences Dean Dr. Matt Smith. The university plans to extend the project by embedding vocational discernment into curricular and co-curricular activities. Trained faculty and staff will continue to work with small groups of students and integrate vocational discernment into their classroom and university operations. Vocation-focused retreats may be developed by Campus Ministry. Materials purchased with grant funds will provide resources for students, faculty and staff to continue the discernment process.

Knights of Columbus chalice donation

GRANGER — The Knights of Columbus recently presented four chalices to Father Innocent Ukaegbu, a diocesan priest from eastern Nigeria, who is currently serving in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. The presentation took place after the 6 p.m. Mass concelebrated by Msgr. William Schoeler and Father Ukaegbu at St. Pius X in Granger on Nov. 13.

Representing the Knights were Steve Gonsoski, outer-sentinel; Thomas “Tommy” Hutkins, trustee; Kevin O’Connor, color corps commander; and Matthew Snyder, faithful navigator. The Knights are members of the Msgr. James P. Conroy Fourth Degree Assembly 2035 based in the Elkhart-Goshen area.

Father John Eze, also of Nigeria, will take the chalices back to Nigeria where they will be given to seminarians who will be ordained. Three will be donated on behalf of Father Ukaegbu and one on behalf of Father Eze. The Knights have a custom of purchasing and donating a chalice to a seminarian in honor of a Fourth Degree Knight when he passes away. In turn, Mr. Gonsoski became aware of the need for chalices for African seminarians as well as the fact that two chalices previously donated in the Elkhart-Goshen area had not been put in service. He was able to get those chalices released as a gift to African seminarians. Additionally, the Knights purchased two more chalices in honor of recently deceased members of their Fourth Degree Assembly.

Dick Dernbos of the Knights of Columbus Father Stephen Badin Council 4263 of Granger also presented 250 rosaries that were handmade by the Venice, Fla., Cenacle of the Marian Movement of Priests, for distribution in Nigeria.

— Tom Uebbing

The Knights of Columbus Council 451 hosted a spaghetti dinner fundraiser for the Catholics on a Mission teen mission trip to Costa Rica recently. The grateful teens and adults involved with the mission trip pose with the generous donation check from the Knights. The team continues to accept donations to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Costa Rica Mission Trip, c/o Stacy Gill, 4835 Long Cannon Pl., Fort Wayne, IN 46804.

Serra Club of South Bend host seminarians

MISHAWAKA — The Serra Club of South Bend will sponsor a dinner honoring the diocesan, Franciscan and Holy Cross seminarians on Friday, Dec. 20, at the St. Francis Convent in Mishawaka. The dinner will be preceded by the rosary and Mass celebrated by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades at 5 p.m. in the Chapel of St. Francis. Invited guests not only include seminarians but their parents and partners of their home parishes as well.

For more information about the Serra Club of South Bend, contact Rachelle Lubinski, chairman of the dinner, at (574) 514-3028 or Stephen Elek, president of the Serra Club of South Bend, at (574) 291-0550.

Bishop Dwenger induct new members to NHS

FORT WAYNE — One hundred nineteen new members were inducted into the Bishop Dwenger chapter, Cives Mundorum Duorum, of the National Honor Society in a candlelight ceremony at the Marquis Ballroom, Marriott Hotel on Nov. 27. The induction was witnessed by family, friends, current members and faculty members and followed by a luncheon.

Students earning a 3.50 grade point average at the end of their sophomore year were invited to apply in late October with a listing of co-curricular activities and service opportunities. Recommendations were received by a board of five faculty members who, in turn, developed a list of nominees recommended for induction.

At Bishop Dwenger High School, National Honor Society members are required to work Saints Alive!, Tournament Day, Tutor in the Resource Room or Algebra Club for one week and participate in at least two other school-service opportunities. These service experiences are in addition to maintaining high scholastic standing, an un tarnished character and a leadership mentality.

Deep vocation exploration for USF students receives grant funding

FORT WAYNE — The University of St. Francis has received a $42,000 grant from the Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE) for a project to help students begin a vocation discernment process in their first year of college.

NetVUE is a network of colleges and universities committed to fostering the internal and theological exploration of vocation in their campus communities. Lilly Endowment Inc. supports the initiative for a two-year cycle.
Catholic Charities food pantries work to feed hungry

BY LISA KOCHANOWSKI

While many families are wrestling with trying to find money to buy their child the latest Xbox, Wii or iPhone, Catholic Charities is working hard to collect food donations to give out hearty and healthy food baskets to their clients for the holidays. Catholic Charities operates food pantries in South Bend and Auburn.

“We have a different menu each week made up of 15-20 pounds of food based upon family size. This usually includes about 15 items or enough food for four meals,” said Claire Coleman, the West Region administrator at Catholic Charities. “This might include two canned vegetables, one canned fruit, one canned meat such as tuna, canned beans, peanut butter and jelly, bread, frozen meat, pancake mix, boxed milk or dried goods, pasta or rice, pasta sauce and one or two fresh items such as vegetables, fruit, eggs, yogurt and cheese. We also will distribute personal care items such as toilet paper, shampoo and toothpaste when we have it available.”

Items inside the food pantry come from a variety of different sources. In South Bend, the pantry receives support through the United Way of St. Joseph County, PFG “People Gotta Eat” Initiative and the Emergency Food and Shelter Program. In Auburn, the agency is a member of the Community Harvest Food Bank of Northeast Indiana and receives USDA commodities to supplement food donated by local community partners. Both agencies also rely on food drives from area churches, schools and businesses.

According to Patti Sheppard, RSVP director who works with the food pantry at the Catholic Charities office in Auburn, the Wal-Mart Distribution Center in their area donates fresh produce weekly. Items like salad bowls, chicken Caesar salad bowls, organic salads, potatoes, mini-ture cupcakes and stew meat have been donated.

“We are extremely fortunate to have great donations from active volunteers and organizations,” said Sheppard. Recently, an anonymous donor purchased fresh meat from a butcher and had it delivered to the food pantry.

Auburn also runs two unique programs through their food pantry. A winter coat distribution project and backpack distribution before school starts.

Donations of coats, hats, mittens and scarves are given to needy families. Currently 552 coats, 319 hats, 449 pairs of mittens and 31 scarves have been distributed.

Everyone has a wish list and items like fresh fruits and vegetables, eggs, butter, yogurt and cheese are a few items Coleman would love to be able to add to food baskets. Sheppard would like to see paper products and toiletries.

“These items are more expensive than purchasing canned goods but we feel it is important to include more nutritious foods in our menu so we try to always include what we can of fresh items,” said Coleman. Items like crackers, a cake mix and pudding are all treats the clients seem to enjoy receiving. Seniors enjoy getting coffee and tea. Cooking oil, sugar, flour and condiments such as mustard, mayonnaise, syrup and salad dressing are also popular items.

As families journey through the Advent season of giving and faith, it is important to remember those people hit by the hard economic times in the country. A person does not have to give hundreds of dollars; a simple collection of food around the neighborhood can help a family in need.

“We would love it if school, church or community groups would sponsor a food drive to benefit the clients of the Catholic Charities’ Food Pantry at any point throughout the year. Of course, we welcome and appreciate individual donations in support of the food pantry as well,” Coleman said.

“If you’re out shopping, get an extra bar of soap or bottle of shampoo,” said Sheppard. “Our clients are going out on job interviews and want to look their best, but can’t buy those simple items with food stamps.”

Hardest Hit Fund offers relief to unemployed homeowners

BY DEB WAGNER

The economy has left many more people in the diocese without work than in recent years. Some people are unemployed for the first time in their lives; others are bracing for their unemployment benefits to expire and have young children to clothe and feed. There is, however, a silver lining in the otherwise cloudy economy today. It is the Hardest Hit Fund (HHF).

The HHF was established in 2011 and awarded by the federal government to the 19 states hardest hit by the economy, including Indiana. The HHF helps pay the eligible individual’s mortgage for 18 months or $18,000, whichever comes first.

The individual must be unemployed or re-employed having become delinquent in the mortgage payments as a result of unemployment under no fault of their own in the last 12 months. He or she must own and reside in only one home and meet the income eligibility requirements based upon the county of residence. It is a loan-based, forgiven program.

Once contact is made through the 877GETHOPE organization, an Indiana Foreclosure Prevention Network specialist is assigned to assist the individual in gathering and completing the necessary documentation to submit to the Indiana Housing Community Development Authority (IHCDA). One to two months following the initial contact with the GETHOPE organization the individual meets with Catholic Charities.

IHCDA oversees the loan application and approval process for the Hardest Hit Fund. Catholic Charities’ role in the program is limited to the Hoosier Corps volunteer service program Robin Springstead, Catholic Charities Region 3 administrator for the volunteer service program in 10 counties in the Fort Wayne area, says, “This program is really for the working class who are unemployed — to help them during this economy, to avoid homelessness.”

Getting help early on is critical and help through HHF allows money that used to be allocated for the mortgage to go towards food and clothing.

Springstead adds that there is “a great deal of funding allotted. Those who think they could qualify should apply as soon as possible.”

Catholic Charities oversees the program in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South because of their extensive experience building the Senior AIDS Job Training Program and the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).

When approved for the Hardest Hit Fund program, a regional administrator from Catholic Charities in Fort Wayne or South Bend schedules an intake interview, conducts an orientation meeting and discusses which of three opportunities most interests the client. The volunteer opportunities consist of job training through organizations such as Work One, or specialized technical training, education to improve or keep skills sharp, or volunteer work through Hoosier Corp. All of the opportunities allow for networking with others in the community, which might lead to employment.

If an application is not approved for the program, the client receives financial counseling and referrals to other organizations that might better serve their needs.

Claire Coleman is the Region 2 administrator for the program in five counties in the South Bend area. She says of the program, “It’s a win-win for everyone. Clients remain in their homes, have opportunities to volunteer in order to maintain their skills and agencies, many of whom we already work with for other programs, receive the help they need to better serve the community.”

For eligibility requirements, or to begin the application process for Hardest Hit Fund visit www.877GetHope.org or call (877) GET-HOPE.
Villa of the Woods is a hidden gem on the city’s south side

BY BONNIE ELDERSON

Villa of the Woods, located at 5610 Noll Ave. on Fort Wayne’s south side, is a hidden gem – a small residential facility, which offers a friendly, family-oriented atmosphere for the senior citizens who call it home.

Run by Catholic Charities, Villa of the Woods is a free-standing licensed residential facility equipped to provide housing, meals, housekeeping, individual laundry and personal services to as many as 35 permanent residents. Each resident has a private room and bath, yet enjoys the companionship of fellow residents at meals and numerous activities available there. Among those activities are crafts, exercise, movies, bingo and card parties. Free cable television is included and many incidentals are provided at no cost. Though there is no provision for nursing care, 24-hour staffing is provided.

The facility had 10 bedrooms with a second floor lavatory, bath and shower rooms. The first floor had a parlor, a combined recreation room and refectory, a laundry, kitchen, trunk room and chapel.

New in her administrative position, Retzos plans to step up marketing plans for the Villa and hopes to secure donations, sponsors and grants to supplement funding. “Whatever money we make goes right back to the residents,” she notes.

Interestingly, Villa of the Woods began life more than a half-century ago as Our Lady of Lourdes Convent and home to the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration who were teachers at nearby Bishop Luers High School. Both the school and convent were blessed and dedicated in 1959. At that time the facility had 10 bedrooms with a second floor lavatory, bath and shower rooms. The first floor had a parlor, a combined recreation room and refectory, a laundry, kitchen, trunk room and chapel.

It wasn’t until 1979 that the building was converted to provide residential accommodations for 27 senior citizens. Then in 2001, more than two decades later, a total remodeling project made possible by a generous bequest to the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend added eight bedrooms, private baths for all rooms, a new dining room and a lounge. At the same time it was refurbished for a cheerful and welcoming appearance.

Residents are looking forward to seeing family and friends at the annual Christmas dinner on Dec. 13, and the Villa is always open to visitors who wish to tour the facility, says Retzos. She is pleased to announce that, beginning in January, people may take an animated “virtual tour” by going to the Catholic Charities website and clicking on Villa of the Woods. “I’m so excited about it,” she says.

Her fervent hope is that the hidden gem on the city’s south side will soon sparkle like a newly cut diamond.

They search for hope and trust... and the comfort that comes from a warm home, regular meals and clean clothes. Please search your heart and give a gift of love by using the Catholic Charities envelope found with your collection envelopes.

At Catholic Charities in South Bend, Fort Wayne and the area, we have the resources and trained personnel to bring the gift you give to the one in need. Thank you for thinking of others!
Holy Cross College partnership with Ancilla College a win-win for quality, affordable Catholic higher education

NOTRE DAME — Holy Cross College announced it will partner with Ancilla College, a Catholic two-year college near Donaldson to assist students who wish to continue their education at a four-year, Catholic institution that values personal attention to students. Effective immediately, students at Ancilla who complete an associate’s degree may apply all credits earned toward a degree in any major offered at Holy Cross College.

“Holy Cross started as a two-year liberal arts college, and so we understand that students need an environment that will personally support them and provide the skills and experiences necessary for a broad range of careers,” says Chris O’Brien, transfer coordinator at Holy Cross College. “We are also supporting local families who are looking for affordable, four-year, Catholic options — and we think our partnership at Holy Cross is automatic. Concurrent enrollment also allows students to ‘lock in’ their HC tuition at the time they enrolled at Ancilla College, and utilize the academic support and advising available at Holy Cross.”

Students who are interested in choosing the Concurrent Enrollment Program option must be admitted to both institutions with a minimum 2.5 high school grade point average (GPA), or transfer to Ancilla College with a minimum 2.5 GPA from their most recent college. As long as the student remains continuously enrolled, completes 24 or more credits per year, and remains in good standing at Ancilla until graduation, the student will pay the Holy Cross tuition that was in effect the term that they enrolled at Ancilla.

“This will potentially save the student two years’ worth of tuition increases,” adds O’Brien. “Holy Cross has always been generous in accepting transfer credit from Ancilla students, and wanted a way to formalize our arrangement.”

Dr. Joanna Blount, Dean of Academic and Student Services at Ancilla College, shared her knowledge of other institutions that were using a “concurrent enrollment” concept and Holy Cross College immediately expressed interest in working together to benefit both colleges. In August, talks began on the idea of concurrent enrollment and the agreement was finalized in late October.

“We are always excited to collaborate with colleges who share a mission similar to that of Ancilla College,” states Dr. Blount. She goes on to say, “This partnership with Holy Cross offers Ancilla students an exciting opportunity to be recognized as part of a senior college as they begin their academic career. Our students will have a seamless transfer academically as they graduate from Ancilla College, utilizing all the credits earned at Ancilla College.”

“Another important aspect of this agreement is that it locks in the tuition in effect at Holy Cross at the time they began their academic career at Ancilla,” Blount explains. “This is a different approach than I’ve seen in Indiana and I am hopeful this will become a model for articulation across the state. It serves the students well and that is a prime consideration for both colleges.”

Ancilla College is a Catholic liberal arts institution of higher learning. Sponsored by the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ, Ancilla College embraces the order’s core values — openness to the spirit, community, simplicity, and dignity and respect for all — and their belief that these four core values flow from joyful service to all, especially with the needy and underserved.

The academic agreement is expected to be in place so students earning an associate degree at Ancilla this December may continue their enrollment at Holy Cross in January 2013. The Concurrent Enrollment Program will be available for students enrolling at Ancilla College starting January 2013.

“Our recent academic articulation agreement with Ancilla College expands the collaboration we already enjoy with this great partner in Catholic higher education,” says Holy Cross College President Brother John Paige. “These agreements are a further commitment by our two institutions to help students earn a college degree in a timely and affordable manner.”

Ancilla already has credit or degree articulation agreements with other colleges including Saint Mary’s College, Western Governors University-Indiana, Bethel College, Trine University, Grace College, Purdue University North Central and the University of Saint Francis.
The Church calls us to rejoice

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

3rd Sunday in Advent
Lk 3:10-18

For centuries this Sunday was called “Gaudete.”
Sunday, the name coming from the first word of the Entrance Antiphon, “Rejoice,” or in Latin, “Gaudete.” Rejoice because the Lord’s arrival into human experience will be soon! While violet is the color prescribed for liturgical vestments in Advent, on this weekend, priests may choose to wear rose vestments. The rose represents the more somber violet brightness by the light of the impending dawn of Christ’s birth. The first reading is from the Book of Zephaniah. This book traces from the seventh century before Christ. It is a rather short work, just three chapters in length, but its language and message are powerful. Its theme is similar to that of the other prophets. Human sin has brought great hardship and heartbreak into the world. Sin is the worst calamity, and people have no one to blame but themselves for their sins. God is always faithful, forgiving and guilty, however. He rescues people by showing them the way out of their sin and by renewing the call to righteousness. Thus, this reading concludes with a call to repentance and joy. All is forgiven! A Savior is on the way! All will be right! Even so, God imposes nothing on people. He does not coerce them into reluctant obedience. He overrules no one as a conqueror overwhelms.

Rather, the people turn to God and reform their lives, although certainly impelled and strengthened by God. For its second reading, the Church presents a reading from the Epistle to the Philippians. As in the first reading, the theme is joy. Christ is the long-awaited Redeemer. He reunites mankind with God. In Jesus is life and hope.

St. Luke’s Gospel is the source of the Gospel reading. The principal figure is John the Baptist, one of the many startling figures of the early Church. A cousin of Jesus, he was a widely known prophet who called people to God. Quite realistic in his understanding of Jesus, John knew that he himself was only the precursor of the promised Savior. Indeed, John said that he was not even worthy to untie the Savior’s sandal strap.

It was a testimony to John — but also to the Redeemer. John was regarded as a holy man. If John could not even perform such a menial task in behalf of the Savior as to untie a sandal strap, then the Savior most certainly was of God.

This reading would have been especially meaningful in the first century to anyone familiar with Jewish tradition and with the environment surrounding Jesus. All the Gospels appeared against the backdrop of God’s relationship with the Jews. Supreme in this relationship was God’s constant mercy, and the penalty was when a Savior would appear.

Reflection

No New Testament writing more splendidly presents the great majesty of Jesus, the Christ, the Savior, the Son of God, and true Christian faith, than does the Epistle to the Philippians. This weekend’s second reading so well captures this quality of Philippians.

“The message is thrillingly given. Jesus is Lord! He is everything.

Opposite this wondrous figure of perfect love and resurrected life, Jesus the Lord, is human sin and the destruction sin creates. Zephaniah alludes to this and its consequences, as does John the Baptist in the Gospel.

Christians can rejoice, however, because they are not doomed to the eternal consequences of their sin. They are redeemed! God, through and in Jesus, will forgive their sins, if they renounce their sin and ask for forgiveness. Then, assured of forgiveness, they can live forever in Christ.

Christmas is near. Jesus is near. Turn away from sin. Be forgiven. Then, because we have reformed ourselves in Advent, the Lord soon will be with us personally. Thus, the Church calls us to rejoice, “gaudete!”

Advent and the art of anticipation

Twenty five years ago, Hallmark introduced a simple device that revolutionized the mechanics of gift giving: a paper bag attached to two handles.

The gift bag freed us from tape and scissors, from sizing and snapping and folding. It enabled us to shop on the run, to pick up present and package in one quick stop — en route to the party, even.

With its cheerful polka dots and bold hues, the gift bag won us over, becoming the norm and often the sole present carrier at birthday parties and bridal showers, becoming the norm and often the sole present carrier at birthday parties and bridal showers, often modern and eminently reusable, making the rounds from closet to closet, across neighborhoods and through extended families, sometimes returning to the original buyer.

Yet I can’t help but wonder if something’s lost with this added convenience. Back before the gift bag, presents had personality. Aunt Kathy wrapped everything in the funny pages. Grandma tied her packages in red yarn. You could trace a person’s fingerprints on the gift she had prepared. For a moment, you paused to take it in, to tilt your head and behold.

The guessing was inevitable, if private — turning the gift, gauging its dimensions — and then, delight in destruction. Let the paper fall where it may. Childhood revisited.

There’s something about receiving an artfully wrapped gift that makes you feel special — beauty that was assembled just for you. And nothing looks better beneath a Fraser fir than wrapped presents, a vivid base leading up to that pointed star.

So I decided to ditch my gift bags and take up the dying art of present wrapping. I play ping Crosby or watch some made-for-TV holiday romance involving a widower and an angel, a small town and a Christmas kiss. Then I set to work creasing my foil giftwrap, fanning a wide, wire-rimmed ribbon and adding a tag and topper once more. I clip a cranberry strand, a glittery reindeer or a glass ornament. I think of the recipient as I wrap and I relish the details: an emerging theme, coordinating colors, signing the tag in loopy cursive. Then I tuck it away.

For me, it’s a way to sink into Advent, that hushed, holy season muffled by big business. Advent reminds us how to wait and wonder, a gift we’ve never needed more. It rebuilds our muscle memory of the times we used stamps and landlines and phone books, when we snapped pictures we couldn’t see right away and wrote articles we couldn’t publish with a click.

It brings an instructive nostalgia, especially for young adults whose lives have been rewired along faster circuits.

Pope Benedict XVI invites us to rediscover Advent every December. My favorite reflection came in his 1986 book, “Seek That Which Is Above.” In it he wrote, “It is the beautiful task of Advent to awaken in all of us memories of goodness and appreciation.”

What more could you ask of any season than to awaken memories of goodness, of loving parents and simpler times of childhood hope in the newborn King and a world that is nothing but open doors?

Advent empties us out, clearing room on our counters and in our minds, teaching us how to delay and to believe, calling us to lose ourselves in thought of others. We slip gifts below the tree and seek that which is above.

Christina Cappechi is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn. She can be reached at www.ReadChristina.com.

READING

Sunday: Zep 3:14-18a (Ps) Is 12:2-6 Phil 4:4-7 Th 3:10-18

Monday: Gn 42-8, 10-10 Ps 72:3-4, 4-7, 17 Mt 21:13-17

Wednesday: Jr 3:25-8, Ps 72:1, 12-13, 18-19 Mt 11:18-25

Thursday: Jr 3:25-8, Ps 72:1, 12-13, 18-19 Mt 11:18-25

Friday: Jr 3:25-8, Ps 72:1, 12-13, 18-19 Mt 11:18-25

Saturday: 1 Sm 12:24-28 (Ps) 1 Sm 2:1, 4-7, 8abcd Lk 1:46-56

Thomas Becket

A London-born clerk to Archbishop Theobald of Canterbury, Thomas studied canon law abroad and was ordained a deacon. His support of Henry II’s claim to England’s throne led to his appointment as royal chancellor. He was the king’s great friend until 1162, when, as the new archbishop of Canterbury, he said he changed from being “a patron of play-actors and a follower of hounds, to being a shepherd of souls.” He and the king clashed over many issues, notably the jurisdiction of ecclesiastical courts. Thomas lived in Paris for six years; when Henry returned to England, Henry’s wish to be rid of this troublesome prelate led to Thomas’ murder by four knights. This medieval martyr starred in two modern plays: Elliot’s “Murder in the Cathedral” and Anouilh’s “Becket.”
Finding joy in the holidays

The holidays are upon us once again and for those who mourn the loss of a loved one that means navigating the uncharted territory of grief and social expectations. We can all probably relate to the holidays, known for their plethora of rich tradition and social activities, as sometimes being wrought with tension and anxiety. Add to that the heightened emotions of grief and you may have a recipe for disaster.

I’ve learned that our sense of loss and longing is sometimes exasperated when special days roll around, bringing with it deep loneliness and perhaps even confusion. This natural reaction to the anticipation of a special day should be honored in personal ways that work best for each of us.

In the Christian tradition, Advent, the four weeks prior to Christmas, is a time of hope in church communities across the globe. As a wise and faith-filled clergyman recently penned “Hope, which brings joy, is the spiritual attitude of Advent.” He went on to say that without hope there is no joy. That attitude of hope must permeate every season of our grief if we are to find joy once again — not only during the holidays, but also beyond.

If anyone would have told me that I would ever find joy again after the sudden death of my husband Trent, 22 years ago — particularly around the holidays — I would have suspected I would have run from the conversation in a fit of disbelief and tears. During those early years following Trent’s death, as I raised my two preschool-age daughters without their loving father, I did find myself confused, with the rather frightening feeling that I was moving backward in my grief, whenever an anniversary or holiday approached.

As I went through the motions of that first Advent season, I found myself openly sensitive and at the same time numb to the festivities. Was there hope in my heart? To be honest, I don’t recall much of that year — a blessing in my estimation — but I do know that I survived — and revived joy — in subsequent years as I learned how to take care of myself in my grief, particularly during a holiday or special event.

Paramount to my journey was giving myself permission to feel whatever emotions surfaced. That took some practice as I tried so hard to live up to everyone else’s expectations. As I learned to plan ahead with a response to certain situations I found the holidays easier to navigate. Taking breaks from the festivities helped return the spirit of hope in my heart so I quickly learned to make quiet time for myself to just “be.”

When I finally relaxed into my own rhythm a couple of years later — I noticed that I held some holiday traditions dear and others were exchanged as I made room for Trent’s memory. A few of the traditional parties are no longer on my social calendar but I make sure not to isolate myself as I seek support for my grief.

Remembering our loved ones in special ways can make the holidays much more meaningful. One special way the girls and I found joy in honoring Trent that first year was to gift his family with dove ornaments embossed with his name. Our family ornament still hangs front and center on our Christmas tree every year.

I have witnessed others who ceremoniously light a candle at a family gathering, make a photo album, pray a prayer or invite others to tell stories. My sister made a special Christmas stocking in memory of her son Adam who died of leukemia. Each year since then, she gifts her special Christmas stationery on which to write a memory to be placed in the stocking. Your loved one can be forever part of your holiday experience, just in a different way.

Another way to remember our loved ones that brings joy to my heart is by speaking their names and telling stories of times past.

Another way to remember our loved ones that brings joy to my heart is by speaking their names and telling stories of times past.

When I broke the ice, they usually learned along the way that family stories sometimes were reluctant to speak about my loss, but when I broke the ice, they usually joined in. For those who choose not to join the conversation, with its laughter and its tears, I just remember that each grief journey is unique and worthy of honoring. I’ve also learned that it’s okay to have fun during the holidays even in grief. It’s ways to take a break from the oppression of mourning, connect with your loved one and recapture a little of the joy of the holiday. Even in the loneliness of grief following Trent’s death, I was deeply grateful to have known him and all that my life held in his stead. Take time to pause this Advent season and discover the hope that these expectant days hold even as you grieve. May the joy of the hope stirring in your heart ring in God’s gift of joy this Christmas.

KAY COZAD is a certified grief educator and the news editor of Today’s Catholic newspaper. She is also the author of “Prayer Book for Widows,” Our Sunday Visitor, 2004. She can be reached at kc@diocesefwsb.org.

CRS thanks the people of the diocese

Dear Bishop Rhodes,

I sincerely thank you and the people of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend for heeding the call to become personally engaged in addressing the needs of our brothers and sisters around the world. Your generosity and thoughtfulness allows CRS to confront global hunger, set up structures and systems to help with disaster recovery efforts and deliver health services to the poorest of nations. This letter will serve as the formal acknowledgement of your recent donation to Catholic Relief Services for the following gift from the diocese: $47,729.74 for CRS Rice Bowl.

Catholic Relief Services has been the international humanitarian agency of the U.S. Catholic community since 1943, reaching millions of people in need, providing relief to communities affected by natural and man-made disasters, and assisting people to gain independence and sustainable livelihoods in countries around the world.

On behalf of all of us at CRS and those who will be touched by your compassionate generosity and spirit of humility, I am grateful for your steadfast support of our mission and leading the faithful in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend to live their faith in solidarity with the poor and marginalized people overseas.

May God bless you for your continued prayers and generous support.

Dr. Carolyn Y. Woo
President and CEO
Catholic Relief Services

Peter’s Pence donation furthers charity work

Your Excellency,

As the personal representative of His Holiness Father in the United States, I write with gratitude for the check in the amount of $66,755.37, which you sent to the Apostolic Nunciature as the Peter’s Pence contribution from the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. (“Peter’s Pence”) is a practical assistance offered to the Successor of Peter, to enable him to respond to the innumerable requests that come to him from every part of the world, especially from the poorest countries.

I warmly thank you for all the work you carry out so generously in a spirit of sacrifice that is born from your faith, from your relationship with the Lord, nurtured every day. May faith, charity and witness continue to be the guidelines of your apostolate.” — Address of Pope Benedict XVI to members of the Circle of St. Peter, Feb. 24, 2012.

I assure you that this sum will be transmitted to the Secretariat of Stewardship of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. May God, who is infinitely generous, reward you and continue to bless you and the faithful under your pastoral care.

With prayerful regards, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Carol Maria Viganò
Apostolic Nuncio

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FORT WAYNE — The St. Vincent’s seventh-grade girls’ team improved to 3-3 after a hard-fought, 34-26 victory over a scrappy St. John the Baptist, Fort Wayne, team on Dec. 5.

In the win, Kennedy O’Boyle registered a double-double with 16 points and 14 rebounds, while guards Meghan Lapp, Winnie O’Brien and Brooke Kunfer dissected the Eagles’ ball-hawking press with precision passing. O’Brien chipped in eight points, six rebounds and five steals, while Lapp added four points, three rebounds, three steals and two assists. Forward Victoria Cooper led the Panthers with four assists to go along with her seven boards. Lily Schenk, Maddie Parent, Erin Tippmann and Emily Anglin provided depth and energy off the bench.

Coach Mark Lapp praised the girls for their continued effort in practice and in the classroom. “This is a great group of girls,” said Lapp, who is sharing bench duties with Coach Pete Schenkel this winter. “Besides their improved play, what we’re most proud of is the way they handle themselves on and off the court,” Lapp said. “In the classroom, every girl is an honor student or high-honor student. On the court they are respectful to opposing coaches, players and the referees, showing great sportsmanship. They represent the best of what Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) athletics is supposed to be about.”

The Panthers also have posted victories over Leo and Memorial Park this season, surpassing their win total from the previous two years combined. A tough loss to a formidable St. Joseph/St. Elizabeth (SJSE) squad (27-15) on Dec. 1 was close until the final minutes of the game. In that contest Ellen Ross was a force for SJSE, registering a game-high 21 points and 10 rebounds.

Ross led SJSE once again in Week 2 of CYO play scoring 18 points, but this time the Panthers fell to the Raiders from St. John the Baptist, New Haven (SJNH), 27-23, in a hard-fought battle that has turned into a fierce, yet fun and friendly rivalry over the years. “They are a well coached team and play very hard,” explained Raider Coach Steve Pepe. Because they did not have enough to make a team, SJNH added three players to their roster this season from the St. Rose-St. Louis Twins.

A pleased Pepe continued, “We are strong in the guard positions and play tough team defense.” He summarized, “We have a long way to go, but are coming together very nicely as a team with our new additions. Picking up their second conference win, the Raiders hit 12 from the charity stripe down the stretch, which helped hold off SJSE. Erica Renninger led the scoring for SJNH with 11 points. Nora Painter added a free throw and the ‘troo of Graces’ rounded out the balanced attack.”

Picking up their new additions. Picking up their

Smith kneels to pray on Luers Field with his Bishop Luers teammates and Bishop Dwenger opponents before the Bishop’s Bowl game on Oct. 12.

Week of awards for Jaylon Smith

FORT WAYNE — Fort Wayne Bishop Luers High School senior Jaylon Smith was awarded the Butkus Award on Dec. 4, as the only high school player in the country to receive this prestigious award and the first ever from Indiana. The Butkus Award, instituted in 1985, is given annually to the top linebackers at the high school, collegiate and professional levels of football. The award, named in honor of College Football Hall of Fame and Pro Football Hall of Fame linebacker, Dick Butkus, is presented by the Butkus Foundation, a nonprofit organization that supports a number of health and wellness activities including the “I Play Clean” anti-steroid program.

In the same week, Smith was presented Fort Wayne’s coveted Euell A. Wilson Award as the most outstanding senior football player in the Summit Athletic Conference.

Finally, Smith received the state’s ultimate honor being named the 2012 Indiana Mr. Football title. He is the first winner from northeast Indiana in the 20-year history of the award.

— Michelle Castleman
High scoring ICCL basketball does not disappoint fans

BY JOE KOZINSKI

ST. JOSEPH COUNTY — The second weekend of action of the Inter-City Catholic League’s season did not disappoint fans as some matchups had them on the edge of their seats until the final buzzer.

One of the bigger contests of the day pitted the Lions of St. Pius against St. Matthew as the orange-and-black-clad Blazers outlasted their foe, 52-49, in the high scoring affair. Nathan Marino and Justin DeClark paced the Blazers with 23 and 18 points respectively as Tony Carmola and Trent Stoner netted 14 and 12 for the Lions.

Christ the King ran past the Eagles of St. Joseph, 50-39, behind the 14- and 12-point efforts of Hunter West and Kyle Summer. Andrew Burgess scored in double figures in the Crusaders of Holy Cross led by the 15-point performance of Elliot Zyniewicz.

The Crusaders of Holy Cross led by the 15-point performance of Elliot Zyniewicz held off the charge of the Bulldogs of Our Lady of Hungary, 34-27, despite Davente Newbill’s 12 points.

The final league games of 2012 will be played on both Saturday and Sunday this weekend at both Saint Joseph and Marian high schools. The ICCL will be hosting a Christmas tournament over the break and resume league play in January.

A complete schedule of games including tournament pairings will be available on the web site at www.icclsports.org.

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades visited with students from the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend who attend Ball State University at the St. Francis University Parish in Muncie on Dec. 1. He celebrated Mass, toured the facility and had dinner with the students.

MUNCIE — St. Francis University Parish, which ministers to students at Ball State University who attend Mass on the weekends and enjoy the comforts of the Newman Center, has also been a home away from home for many Catholic students from the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

The campus ministry and the Fellowship of Catholic University Students, an organization of young missionaries committed to evangelization on college campuses, are producing a great deal of fruit, including seminarians for both the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend for dinner, provided by one of the parishioner families.

The students and bishop engaged in an insightful question-answer conversation concerning the HHS mandate and other topics of interest and told stories.

Bishop Rhoades gave encouraging final words to the students and blessed them for their upcoming finals.

The campus ministry program and Fellowship of Catholic University Students are producing a great deal of fruit, including seminarians for both the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend and the Diocese of Lafayette, where the university parish is located.

Muncie — St. Francis University Parish, which ministers to students at Ball State University who attend Mass on the weekends and enjoy the comforts of the Newman Center, has also been a home away from home for many Catholic students from the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.
WHAT’S HAPPENING?

WHAT’S HAPPENING carries announcements about upcoming events in the diocese. Send in your announcement at least two weeks prior to the event. Mail to: Today’s Catholic, P.O. Box 11169, Fort Wayne 46856; or email: fhogan@diocecesfbw.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.

Christmas breakfast with Santa
South Bend — The Corpus Christi School class of 2013 will have a Christmas breakfast with Santa from 8:30 a.m. to noon on Sunday, Dec. 16, in the school gym, 2800 Corpus Christi Dr. Tickets are $6 for adults, $5 for seniors and $3 for children 12 and under. Family tickets are $20. All tickets available at the door.

Knights plan Sunday breakfast
Fort Wayne — The Knights of Columbus Council 11043 will have a breakfast on Sunday, Dec. 16, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Queen of Angels activities center, 1500 W. State Blvd. Tickets are $6 for adults, $3 for children 6-12 and a family is $20. Carry-out available.

Christ Child Festival plans for 61st year
Fort Wayne — The Christ Child Festival will be held at the Allen County Memorial Coliseum Dec. 14-16. There is no admission fee, however the Coliseum charges for parking. Refreshments will be available at no charge. Attendees may bring a donation for the Associated Churches Food Bank.

Fish fry planned
Warsaw — The Knights of Columbus Council 4511 will have a fish fry on Friday, Dec. 14, from 4:30-7 p.m. at the council hall. Cost is $8.50 for adults and $4 for children ages 6-12. Carry-outs are $8.50.

Gaudete Sunday Mass commemorated
South Bend — St. Patrick Parish will celebrate Gaudete/Rejoice Sunday, Dec. 16, with a 10:30 a.m. Mass celebrated by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades. All past and present members of the parish schooled, baptized or married at the church, are invited.

Square Dances
New Haven — St. Louis Besanon, 15535 Lincoln Hwy E., will have square dances Saturday, Dec. 8, 9, and March 9 in the hall. Doors open at 7:30 p.m., music by Breakaway until 11 p.m. Tickets are $10 per person and include one drink and snacks. Proceeds benefit St. Louis Academy.

Knights plan spaghetti dinner
South Bend — The Knights of Columbus Council 3521, 61533 S. Ironwood Dr., will have a spaghetti dinner on Friday, Dec. 21, from 5-7 p.m. Adults $8, children (5-12) $3.50. Carry-out available.

Day of Reflection
Mishawaka — A day of reflection will be held at St. Francis Convent (across from Marian High School) Wednesday, Dec. 19, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The theme for the day is “Quiet Waiting.” Bring a Bible. The cost of the day is $20 and includes lunch. Register by Dec. 14 to Sister Barbara Anne Hallman at (574) 259-5427.

Prison ministry needs support
Yoder — The St. Aloysius Knights of Columbus prison ministry/angel tree Christmas program is once again asking for volunteers and sponsors. Call Mark at (260) 622-4042 for information.

Divine Liturgy celebrated in Fort Wayne
Fort Wayne — St. Andrew the Apostle Eastern Catholic Mission will celebrate the Byzantine Divine Liturgy at 9:30 a.m. in the St. Mother Theodore Guérin Chapel on Sunday, Dec. 16. They assemble under the mutual blessing of Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, and Bishop Richard Seminack of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of St. Nicholas in Chicago — honoring the reality of Catholic unity in diversity.

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Bishop Rhoades blesses and dedicates new addition at Immaculate Conception Church

BY BONNIE ELBERSON

AUBURN — Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades made the short drive north to Immaculate Conception Church in Auburn last Saturday to celebrate the evening Mass with parishioners there and bless a recently completed addition to the church.

As is his custom, Bishop Rhoades greeted the assembly warmly. “What a joy it is to be with you this evening,” he said. And he noted how appropriate it was to be present for the special event on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception in a church of the same name.

Parishioner Sarah Speer, chair of the communications committee, called the new addition a project that had been under discussion for “years and years” and that finally came to fruition just this year.

There had long been concern that the church community lacked a sense of togetherness because after attending Mass, parishioners immediately left for home because there was no sheltered area outside the main body of the church where people could congregate. There was no protected outdoor area where people could gather and a covered entranceway to provide better access for the elderly and handicapped.

Then three years ago Father Derrick Sneyd arrived on the scene and took charge. “It was great to have someone say, ‘Let’s just do it,’” said Speer, describing Father Derrick’s approach to the long-standing issue. The pastor himself said it came down to a “new thinking track” and a discussion of what the parish really required. As well as a gathering area, the parish needed more space for religious education for children and adults.

Father Sneyd also anticipates that the area will become a liturgical and church history center for DeKalb, Noble and Steuben counties and looks forward to serving the larger Catholic community as well. “Anything we do is helping the universal Church,” he pointed out.

The building and finance committees immediately went to work on the fundraising effort with a “one-time ask” approach to the project. Father Sneyd said firmly, “I did not ask twice.”

Parishioners were contacted and requested to do whatever they could to help meet the goal. Committee members David Hefty and Tom Bendinger worked especially hard on the campaign, said Speer, and “we had a generous response from everyone in the parish.”

Father Derrick noted with pride that $420,000 came in on the initial request, with the remainder pledged and due in the next 18 months to meet the $600,000 construction cost.

The work began as soon as funds were secured and was fully completed just a week ago, though the pastor kept the new addition under wraps until its official unveiling. Parishioners arrived for the Mass and dedication, they were seen to peer around the corner of the church for a glimpse of the new construction.

As Immaculate Conception parishioners assembled in the new gathering area after Mass, Bishop Rhoades said to them, “I inaugurate and bless this new parish addition ... where many will come to know one another.”

As Immaculate Conception parishioners gathered in the new gathering area after Mass, Bishop Rhoades blessed the new addition that offers a gathering space at Immaculate Conception Church in Auburn on Dec. 8.

Bishop Rhoades blesses the baptismal font at Immaculate Conception Church in Auburn.

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For more information, please contact:
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Director of Mission Delivery
800.283.4812 ext. 132