Saint Mary’s presents ‘Voices of Young Catholic Women’ to pope

BY TIM JOHNSON

VATICAN CITY — Even cloudy skies and showers could not dampen the spirits of a Saint Mary’s College senior, a 2014 alumna, college President Carol Ann Mooney and Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, as a handmade stole, art and letters collected by the college titled “Voices of Young Catholic Women” were presented to Pope Francis during his general audience on Wednesday, Nov. 26.

Students, supported by Saint Mary’s Center for Spirituality (CFS) and the Campus Ministry office, organized a national letter-writing response to Pope Francis’s outreach to young people to encourage the Millennial Generation — those born between 1981-1995 — to write to the pope about their love for Catholic tradition and offer ideas on how the Church might better reach their demographic. CFS advertised the Voices project in America magazine and sent letters and

Saint Mary’s College President Carol Ann Mooney and Kristen Millar of the class of 2015 hand-deliver the “Voices of Young Catholic Women” project to Pope Francis on Wednesday, Nov. 26. Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades introduced the contingency to Pope Francis.

World Youth Day memories spark renewed interest for 2016 trip to Krakow

BY KAY COZAD

Youths from around the world are making plans to converge on Krakow, Poland, in July of 2016 to experience the universal Catholic Church in all its glory at the weeklong World Youth Day (WYD) event. Pope Francis has announced the theme for the 31st World Youth Day as “Blessed are the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them.” (Matthew 5:7).

World Youth Day was introduced in 1985 by then Pope John Paul II who desired that a celebration of youth be at the diocesan level each year as well as a weeklong international event every two to three years.

The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend has sent its youth on several WYD pilgrimages across the world over the years and 2016 will be no different. Registration for World Youth Day 2016 began July 26, in the diocese. The total cost for the pilgrimage is estimated at $4,000. The pilgrimage cost includes the registration fee for WYD, round trip airfare, transportation to and from the airport, motor coach transportation between cities in Poland, hotel accommodations, breakfast daily at the hotel and all meals on days seven through 11. And though WYD 2016 is not a diocesan-wide fund raising event, some parishes around the diocese are working to ensure their youths have the opportunity to grow in faith on this spiritual pilgrimage.
‘Prepare the way of the Lord’

IN TRUTH AND CHARITY

BY BISHOP KEVIN C. RHOADES

In this season of Advent, we frequently encounter in the readings of the liturgy the austere figure of Saint John the Baptist, the precursor of the Lord. He preached in the wilderness of Judea. His mission was to prepare and clear the way for the Lord. He called the people to repent of their sins and to correct their life. During these weeks of Advent, while we prepare for the celebration of Christmas, it is important that we hear the voice of John the Baptist and respond to his appeal for conversion. In this holy season, through the voice of John, the Church invites us to open our hearts to receive the Son of God. Unfortunately, we can easily lose the focus of faith during these weeks before Christmas and fall into the materialistic mindset of our culture. We must not allow the voice of John the Baptist to be drowned out by the noise around us.

Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight His paths! These words of Isaiah foretold the message and mission of John the Baptist. This call to prepare the way of the Lord and to make straight His paths was urgent and is still urgent. God came in the Person of His Son when the Word became flesh. This is what we celebrate at Christmas. He still comes today. The Lord invites us to receive Him and His gift of salvation. He invites us to accept His Son into our lives, to be His disciples in the world today.

What does it mean to make straight His paths? There are so many crooked paths we can be tempted to walk. We can get off track in our Christian lives, falling into sin, walking along roads that deviate from our faith. There are many temptations to stray from the path of the Lord and to get lost along the way, to stray from the Gospel. During Advent, it is good to make straight the path of the Lord in our hearts by examining our lives, clearing the way for the Lord to act in us with His grace. It is important to look at our lives and to see where our choices and actions have not been in harmony with the Gospel. The sacrament of Penance is a great way for all of us to heed the call of John the Baptist to repentance and conversion.

Advent is a season of commitment and conversion in preparation for the Lord’s coming. It is also a time of sincere prayer preparing for the celebration of our Savior’s birth. This joy comes from faith in the Incarnation, in the fact that Jesus brings us salvation. In the midst of so much darkness in our world, we see light, the light of Christ that overcomes the darkness of sin, selfishness, and death. The Lord comes. He is not a distant God; He is Emmanuel (God-with-us). This is the cause of our joy, the true joy of Christmas that God not only exists, but that He comes to us and is close to us always. He came to earth to be with us and to share in our human condition. He came to save us and He is with us even now. He is with us in the Church and in the Holy Eucharist. He is always at our side, no matter the challenges and problems we encounter. He loves us and He saves us.

To experience the true joy and peace of Christmas, we need to prepare ourselves during these weeks of Advent. I mentioned that confession is a great way to prepare for Christmas. Prayer is also so important. Maybe we can find some time to attend a few daily Masses during Advent, a great way to put the focus on the true meaning of Christmas. We can so easily get caught up in the secularism of our culture’s observance of Christmas, including the materialism that surrounds us. In a consumer society, we can be tempted to seek joy in things, but things really do not bring us fulfillment. When we neglect the spiritual, we end up living Christmas as a merely external holiday. It is so much more: it is the feast of the Son of God who came to bring us peace, life, and true joy.

Besides confession and prayer, I would like to recommend an act of charity as a way to prepare the way of the Lord and to observe the true meaning of Christmas. There are many opportunities to give a gift to the poor and needy during this season, or to make a visit to someone who is sick or lonely. To practice the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, to reach out to those in need, is an integral part of our faith. To be mindful of those who are hurting and to bring them Christ’s love is a great way to live the true meaning of Christmas.

During these weeks of Advent, let us make sure that we listen to the voice of John the Baptist so as to make room for Jesus, the Word who saves us, and to welcome Him into our hearts. Let us keep our focus on the Child in the manger and make sure that we preserve the primacy of God in our life.

This week we will celebrate two beautiful feasts of Mary: the Immaculate Conception on December 8th and Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 12th. Mary is the Virgin of Advent. She awaits and prepared silently and prayerfully for the birth of her Son. May she intercede for us, that we will be ready to receive anew, in our hearts and in our whole lives, our Savior, Christ the Lord!

Bishop to celebrate 10th anniversary of ordination to episcopacy

Remembering the 10th anniversary of his episcopal ordination, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades will celebrate Mass on Dec. 8, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne at 12:05 p.m. The faithful are invited to the Mass. He was ordained a bishop on Dec. 9, 2004, for the Diocese of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. He was installed the ninth bishop of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend on Jan. 13, 2010.
I’d like to share with you in this additional column about my recent pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi during Thanksgiving week. The reason for my trip was to present to our Holy Father, Pope Francis, President Carol Mooney and a student representative from Saint Mary’s College who presented to the Pope 250 letters from young Catholic women of Saint Mary’s College and throughout the United States. The letters contained many beautiful and touching reflections by these young women about their Catholic faith. They also shared their ideas about “the new evangelization” of women their age in the United States. The Pontifical Council for the New Evangelization supported this project and arranged for the presentation at the end of the papal audience on November 26th.

While in Rome, I had the opportunity to celebrate Mass for the Saint Mary’s students who are studying for a semester or year abroad in Rome. They got up early to attend the Mass at the beautiful Basilica of Sant’Andrea della Valle, near their hotel. Deacon Royce Gregerson, a seminarian of our diocese studying in Rome, served as deacon at the Mass. I was happy to spend some time with Deacon Royce and also with Father Francis Chukwuma who is working on his doctorate in canon law at the Lateran University. Father Francis, a priest of the Diocese of Awka, Nigeria, has served in our diocesan tribunal and also as pastor of Saint Joseph’s Church in Bluffton. Both Father Francis and Deacon Royce are happy and doing well and, of course, working hard in their studies.

It was a joy and an honor to meet Pope Francis twice during the week. I concelebrated Mass with the Holy Father in the chapel of his residence on November 24th and spoke with him after Mass. He gave a beautiful homily on the Gospel of the poor widow who gave all she had in the temple. The Pope spoke of how the poor widow is an image of the Church and our responsibility to understand the Gospel.

At the papal audience, I sat next to Archbishop Amel Nona, the Chaldean Catholic Archbishop of Mosul in Iraq, and Bishop John Vadakel of Bijnor, India. We spoke for about an hour before the 2003 war. Before ISIS took control earlier this year, there were approximately 10,000 Catholics. Almost all have now fled. There are hardly any Catholics left in his archdiocese, hardly any Catholics left in his archdiocese, and the archdiocese has been in exile,” so to speak. Many live in churches, schools, and refugee camps in Kurdistan and northern Iraq. The archbishop now lives in the city of Irbil where the largest number of his faithful now reside. Archbishop Nona told me that he doesn’t have much hope that his people will return to Mosul even if ISIS is expelled, since the Christians were already living in danger and persecuted prior to the invasion and occupation by ISIS. He said that radical Islamic extremists were already residing in Mosul and had welcomed ISIS. The archbishop now lives in the city of Irbil where the largest number of his faithful now reside. Archbishop Nona told me that he doesn’t have much hope that his people will return to Mosul even if ISIS is expelled.

In his letter, Pope Francis also expressed hope that the signs of the times and responded with gratitude, rediscovering the way their predecessors read “the signs of the times” and responded with creativity. However, it also involves recognizing the difficulties and insurmountable gifts, making it possible to live as brothers and sisters.”

Support Catholic religious in their mission, ministries, pope says

“Wake up the world, enlightening it with your prophetic and countercultural witness,” he said in the message to those at Mass in St. Peter’s the next morning.

“The pope’s letter for the year explained that while he was writing as pope, he was also writing as a Jesuit, ‘a brother who, like yourselves, is consecrated to the Lord.'”

Knowing the gifts and challenges of religious life from the inside, Pope Francis urged religious “to look to the past with gratitude,” rediscovering the way their predecessors read “the signs of the times” and responded with creativity. However, it also involves recognizing the difficulties and insurmountable gifts, making it possible to live as brothers and sisters.”

Within communities, within dioceses and within the Church, he said, religious are called to be “experts in communion,” a call that is prophetic in the modern world. “In a polarized society where different cultures experience difficulty in living alongside one another and where the powerless encounter oppression, where inequality abounds, we are called to offer a concrete model of community which, by acknowledging the dignity of each person and sharing our consubstantial gifts, makes it possible to live as brothers and sisters.”

Pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi

By Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

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Pope calls European Parliament to rejuvenate ‘grandmother’ Europe

BY CINDY WOODEN

STRASBOURG, France (CNS) — The 77-year-old grandson of European immigrants to Argentina, Pope Francis urged the European Parliament to value the continent’s faiths and recuperate a sense of responsibility for the common good to rejuvenate Europe’s social, political and economic life.

“In many quarters we encounter a general impression of weariness and aging, of a Europe which is now a ‘grandmother,’ no longer fertile and vibrant,” he said Nov. 25. In too many cases, he said, the Judeo-Christian values and the humanist ideals that inspired the continental drive toward unity seem to have been replaced by “the bureaucratic technicalities of its institutionalism.”

Pope Francis, the first non-European pope in almost 1,300 years, was scheduled to spend a week in Strasbourg visiting only the European Parliament and the Council of Europe. It was the shortest foreign papal trip ever and the first that did not feature at least one visit to a church.

Because it was organized strictly as a visit to the European institutions, the pope traveled to and from the airport in a closed car, not the popemobile. Along the route from the airport, scattered groups of a few people waited at the intersections with smartphones or cameras in their hands. There were plenty of French police lining the route, but the only significant groups of bystanders were at the tram stops.

Instead of making a pastoral visit, Pope Francis went to the heart of European unity and bureaucracy: the European Parliament, the legislative arm of the 28-member European Union; and the Council of Europe, an organization of 47 countries formed to promote democracy, human rights and the rule of law on the continent.

A few parliamentarians objected to the pope’s visit, saying it violated the separation of Church and state. But Martin Schulz, the parliament’s president, told the pope his words “carry enormous weight not only because you are the spiritual leader of more than 1 billion believers. Your words carry enormous weight because they speak to everyone” and because “the issues you raise concern everyone.”

“Theology,” he told the pope, “provide counsel and direction in times of confusion.”

The other pope to visit the European Parliament was St. John Paul II in 1988, a year before the Berlin Wall fell and marked the beginning of the end of a Europe divided into democratic West and communist East.

Despite the expansion of democracy and the incorporation of more countries into the European Union, Pope Francis told the parliament, “Europe seems to give the impression of being somewhat elderly and haggard, feeling less and less a protagonist in a world which frequently regards it with aloofness, mistrust and even, at times, suspicion.”

But strength is needed, he said, to defend the democracy dreamt of for so long. The continent’s democracies, the pope said, “must not be allowed to collapse under the pressure of multinational interests which are not universal, which weaken them and turn them into uniform systems of economic power at the service of unseen empires.”

Giving new life to the European project, he said, “depends on the recovery of the vital connections between transcendent values and attention to the talents of Europe’s peoples and their concrete needs. ‘A Europe that is no longer open to the transcendent dimension of life is a Europe which risks slowly losing its own soul and that ‘humanistic spirit’ which it still loves and defends.’

European Union discussions are filled with references to human rights, but, the pope said, the idea of duties that go along with rights seem to be largely absent. “As a result, the rights of the individual are upheld, without regard for the fact that each human being is part of a social context wherein his or her rights and duties are bound up with those of others and with the common good of society itself.”

Even worse, he said, the most basic right — the right to life — is denied to many, including the unborn, the terminally ill and the elderly. “There are still too many situations in which human beings are treated as objects whose conception, configuration and utility can be programmed and who can then be discarded when no longer useful due to weakness, illness or old age.”

The selfish live with “an opacity” that is not sustainable and is indifferent to others, particularly the poor, he said. Economic, trade and employment policies seem dictated by technical and financial considerations, he said, and that “men and women risk being reduced to mere cogs in a machine.”

In addition, he said, too many of Europe’s citizens face “disheartening discouragement from expressing their religious convictions, too many of them go hungry and even more “lack the work which confers dignity.”

The original inspiration for European unity was the “transcendent dignity” of the human person, a dignity that endowed each person with inalienable rights, which could be respected most fully in a democracy, in peace and with special concern to help the weakest members of the community and the world, the pope said.

In the parliamentary chambers he also noted “the many instances of injustice and persecution which daily afflict religious minorities, and Christians in particular, in various parts of the world.” He urged attention to the plight of those facing barbaric acts of violence” because of their faith. “They are evicted from their homes and native lands, sold as slaves, killed, beheaded, crucified or burned alive under the shameful ad complicit silence of so many.”

Protection of the environment, an agriculture policy that respects farmers and the land, improving employment rates and handling migration are particularly urgent, concrete problems that require a response honoring the transcendent dignity of the human person and recognizing the realities of this world, he said.

As the Italian government continues to decry a lack of European Union solidarity and assistance with the thousands of migrants who cross the Mediterranean seeking freedom and a better life in Europe, the pope insisted the response to migration must be continent-wide.

“We cannot allow the Mediterranean to become a vast cemetery,” he said, referring to the thousands who have drowned trying to cross from northern Africa on rickety boats.

Pope Francis insisted: “The time has come to work together in building a Europe which revolves not around the economy, but around the sacredness of the human person, around inalienable values.”
LETS GO TO THE CHILD IN THE MANGER!

A Notre Dame Advent pilgrimage to Nativity scenes from around the world, on loan from The Marian Library International Crèche Collection

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Begin at the Eck Visitors Center at 2:30 p.m. and concludes at the Main Building by 4:30 p.m. Pilgrims will visit Nativity scenes in various campus locations along Notre Dame Avenue.


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A new way to support Catholic Schools: SGOs

BY JODI MAGALANES

Charitable giving is a year-round practice for SGOs in 2013. As the window of tax-deductible giving draws to a close for 2014, it may once again be on the minds of both individual and corporations.

“There are many ways in which the Church invites us to give: opportunities such as one’s parish offertory, the Bishop’s Appeal, Pentecost collection and parish capital campaigns,” noted Harry Verhiley, director of the Office of Development for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. These are all necessary giving opportunities, and our act of giving reflects the deeper work of the Holy Spirit within us.”

One relatively new vehicle through which one’s giving does local, immediate and direct good is called a scholarship granting organization or SGO.

The Indiana Department of Education passed a bill approving the formation of SGOs in 2011, the same year that it established the Indiana Choice Scholarship program — known as the “voucher” program. SGOs provide scholarship funds to families to further help them afford the private or parochial school of their choice.

Funding for SGO scholarships comes from corporations and business owners, as well as private donations, and rewards donors with a 50 percent state tax credit on top of the usual state and federal charitable tax deductions.

During the 2013-14 school year, which was the first that SGO scholarships were given to students at all grade levels in the diocese, 1,900 students received one. The scholarships are awarded in a minimum amount of $500 and are based on income and family size.

These awards allowed many of the approximately 5,600 children in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend to qualify for vouchers that enabled them to pursue a Catholic education this school year.

The Scholarship Granting Organization of Northeast Indiana exclusively serves Catholic schools in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. Donations to SGOENI can be restricted to a particular school, or unrestricted — to be used in the schools with the greatest needs. Individual schools do their best to raise funds for their own students, and those funds are channeled through the SGOENI office and returned to the same school, said Jeffrey Boetticher, director of Diocesan Tuition Assistance for the Catholic Schools Office. Donations given independently of any particular school serve to supplement the individual efforts of all the schools.

As development director at Saint Joseph High School for 10 years, Boetticher headed up the capital campaign to build the new high school. The doors of the new Saint Joseph High School opened in 2012, and in August he joined the Catholic Schools Office to manage the SGOENI and the large number of Indiana School Choice vouchers being utilized by students to attend schools in the diocese. Both programs have grown tremendously over the past few years, and parishioners across the diocese have supported Catholic school students in ways that impress Boetticher on a daily basis.

“Thanks to programs like these, the generosity of so many people, our schools are now more affordable than they’ve ever been for low and middle-income families,” said Verhiley. “That is deeply important to us — we want to provide a great education and have it be as affordable as possible.”

The programs are also the reason why he is encouraging proponents of Catholic education to contact their representatives about increasing the SGO tax credit cap. The proceeds from the combined amount of donations to the five Indiana SGO organizations threatens to meet an imposed $7.5 million tax credit limit. One that cap is reached donations to SGOs can still be accepted, but donors do not receive the state tax benefits. A proposal to increase the tax-credit cap will be debated by lawmakers in the spring.

“A gift to the SGO offers a tax benefit, which is a good thing for the donor,” acknowledged Verhiley. “However, as Christian stewards, we must always be careful not to simply — give to get. The noteworthy point of an SGO is that students will receive Catholic education and be formed in the faith.”

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CLOSE TO HOME!
Pope tells Mideast, African refugees wars that caused flight must end

ISTANBUL (CNS) — Pope Francis met with young refugees from civil wars in Syria and Iraq, a few hours after joining Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople to denounce the plight of Christians there.

“Today the degrading conditions in which so many refugees are forced to live are intolerable,” the pope told about 100 young refugees in Istanbul Nov. 30, less than an hour before boarding his flight to Rome. “We must do everything possible to eradicate the causes of this situation.”

Addressing the refugees, who included Christians and Muslims, Pope Francis publicly reiterated that in appreciation for Turkey’s acceptance of refugees from neighboring lands — an estimated 1.6 million from Syria alone —

The pope did not repeat his earlier statements of qualified support for multinational military action against ISIS forces, but he appealed for “greater international cooperation to resolve the conflicts which are causing bloodshed in your homelands, to counter the other causes which are driving people to leave their home countries, and to improve conditions so that people may remain or return home.”

Meeting about 100 young refugees in the Catholic Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Pope Francis told them, “I wanted to meet other refugees, but it was not possible.” The young people, who also included refugees from Somalia and other parts of the Horn of Africa, sang for the pope in Spanish, English and Arabic.

Earlier in the day, the pope joined Patriarch Bartholomew, considered first among equals by Orthodox bishops, to sign a joint declaration that highlighted cooperation to resolve the conflicts which are causing bloodshed in the region.

“We cannot resign ourselves to a Middle East without Christians,” the leaders wrote, specifically noting the conflicts in Syria and Iraq.

“Many of our brothers and sisters are being persecuted and have been forced violently from their homes,” the declaration said. “Tragically, all this is met by the indifference of many.”

The statement described an “ecumenism of suffering,” by the indifference of many.

“Tragically, all this is met by the indifference of many.”

Pope Francis also speaking during the liturgy, said that the “cry of the victims of conflict urges us to move with haste along the path of reconciliations and communion between Catholics and Orthodox. Indeed, how can we credibly proclaim the message of peace which comes from Christ, if there continues to be rivalry and disagreement between us?”

The leaders’ joint declaration called for peace in eastern Ukraine, where a war between government forces and Russian-backed separatists has exacerbated historic tensions between Eastern Catholic and Orthodox communities there.

“We call upon all parties involved to pursue the path of dialogue and of respect for international law,” the declaration said, in an apparent reference to Russia’s support for the separatists, which has drawn international condemnation.

Pope Francis said unity between the churches is also necessary to combat the “structural causes of poverty,” including unemployment and scarce housing, and a “dominant culture” of materialism that particularly demoralizes the young.

The pope assured his listeners that, “to reach the desired goal of full unity, the Catholic Church does not intend to impose any conditions except that of the shared profession of faith,” and that Orthodox Christians would not lose their distinctive forms of worship, spirituality and governance in a union with Rome.

Full communion between the churches, which have been divided since 1054, “means neither submission of one to the other nor absorption, but rather welcoming of all the gifts that God has given to each to show the whole world the great mystery of salvation realized by Christ the Lord through the Holy Spirit,” the pope said.

The pope’s first meeting of the day was with Rabbi Isak Haleva, chief rabbi of Turkey. Turkey’s Jewish community of about 25,000 traces its origins to the 1492 expulsion of the Jews from Spain.

On the way to the airport for his return flight to Rome, Pope Francis stopped at an Istanbul hospital to visit 58-year-old Armenian Orthodox Patriarch Mesrob II, who is seriously ill.
AROUND THE DIOCESE

THANKSGIVING FOOD DRIVE SUCCESS AT SAINT JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL IN SOUTH BEND

Saint Joseph High School students unload truckloads of food for the h.o.p.e. (Helping Other People Endure) Thanksgiving Food Drive. The South Bend school raised more than $20,000 through donations from student, faculty and staff. More than 350 families received boxes of food and toiletries, which were delivered by volunteers.

New Women’s Care Center opens in Indianapolis

INDIANAPOLIS — Indianapolis Roman Catholic Archbishop Joseph Tobin presided over a blessing ceremony at a new pregnancy resource center in Indianapolis on Nov. 19. The new Women’s Care Center, which helps women facing unplanned pregnancies, opened Nov. 20 at 86th and Georgetown Road — next door to the busiest Planned Parenthood in Indiana’s 92 counties.

The center will provide support, medical care, parenting skills classes and mentoring to women who visit the location.

“As our Holy Father has said over and over again, he wants the believing community to be a field hospital for wounded humanity,” Archbishop Tobin said during the blessing ceremony. “And wounded humanity will arrive here — and will be treated with love and respect.”

The Indianapolis facility will become the 23rd care center to open in seven states. Today, Women’s Care Centers also are located in Florida, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin. Together, they serve 25,000 women annually.

In Indiana, care center locations are open in Bremen, Elkhart, Fort Wayne, LaPorte, Michigan City, Mishawaka, Plymouth and South Bend.

Sarah Bardol, the center’s director, said, “The center saves babies from abortion by loving and serving their scared young mothers.”

The place where the center is located is no accident. Bardol reported that land right next door to the largest abortion clinic in Indiana was originally purchased by a doctor in Lafayette with the objective of making it available for a pro-life outreach.

The location is an important part of fulfilling the organization’s mission, which is to provide a visible and loving, supportive environment that gives women the opportunity to choose life for their babies.

Bardol said that translates into encouraging healthy pregnancies, and helping young moms create personalized plans to stay in school, find housing, child care and job opportunities and learn about positive parenting and adoption.

But will having a resource like Women’s Care Center next door to a place that performs abortions at a rate of approximately 77 a week really make a difference?

Bardol said, “Ninety-seven percent of the pregnant women who received services chose life for their babies.” Bardol also pointed out that when Women’s Care Centers opened in Fort Wayne and South Bend, abortions declined dramatically. The number of women having abortions in South Bend and Fort Wayne has declined 54 percent since 1998, almost double the declines for the rest of the state.

SEMINARIANS CELEBRATE CANDIDACY

Seminarians from the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend who accepted candidacy on Nov. 21 in a Mass celebrated by Bishop Paul S. Loverde, center, of the Diocese of Arlington, Virginia, include from left of Bishop Loverde, Craig Borchard (St. Pius X, Granger), Bob Garrow (St. Matthew Cathedral, South Bend), and David Violi (St. Pius X, Granger). Also in the photo at left is Father Andrew Budzinski, vocation director.
Pope prays in Istanbul mosque, rallies local Christians

BY FRANCIS X. ROCCA

ISTANBUL (CNS) — A day after hearing Turkish leaders demand the West show more respect for Islam, Pope Francis prayed alongside a Muslim cleric inside Istanbul’s most famous mosque.

At the Blue Mosque, Istanbul’s grand mufti Rahmi Yaran led Pope Francis to the mosque’s “mihrab,” a niche indicating the direction to the holy city Mecca. He explained that the name is related to that of Jesus’s mother, Mary, who is revered by Muslims.

Then, as the grand mufti continued speaking, the pope fell silent and remained so for several minutes, with head bowed, eyes closed and hands clasped in front of him. A Vatican statement later described this as a “moment of silent adoration.”

The Sultan Ahmed Mosque, an early 17th-century structure, is known as the Blue Mosque for the predominant color of the 21,000 tiles decorating its interior.

The pope’s Nov. 29 visit had been scheduled for later in the morning but was moved up, out of concern that it would interfere with noon prayers.

The event recalled the last papal visit to Turkey, in 2006, when Pope Benedict XVI’s prayer in the same mosque went far to ease an international furor over his speech in Regensburg, Germany, which had quoted a medieval description of the teachings of Islam’s prophet Muhammad as “evil and inhuman.”

For Pope Francis, the prayer was only the latest dramatic sign of a desire for closer relations with Islam, including his washing the feet of two Muslims during a Holy Thursday liturgy in 2013, and his invitation to Muslim and Jewish leaders to pray for peace in the Vatican Gardens the following year.

After his arrival in Turkey Nov. 28, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan raised the issue of prejudice and intolerance against Muslims in other countries, saying that “Islamophobia is a serious and rapidly rising problem in the West” and lamenting that “attempts to identify Islam with terrorism hurt Muslims.”

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Later, during a visit to the Presidency of Religious Affairs, its president, Mehmet Gormez, decried what he called the “dissemination of terror scenarios by the global media through anti-Muslim expressions, which is a form of racism and which has now turned into a crime of hatred.”

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Parishioner continues legacy of ushering at cathedral

BY VINCE LABARBERA

FORT WAYNE — The concept of an usher is not new. In the Old Testament, there were positions addressed as “doorkeepers” or “gatekeepers,” and their roles were very similar to the ministry of ushering in a church today.

In fact, Jesus’ disciples can be considered ushers, in the sense that they prepared the way for Jesus, kept order among those listening to Christ, served food to the audience and cleaned up after a service, such as the “Feeding of the Five Thousand.”

For Lois Devine, a member of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Fort Wayne, ushering is a ministry she is continuing for her late husband, John. Literally following in the footsteps of his father, Calistus, John served as the head usher at the cathedral from about age 14 until his death in 2003. “I don’t greet and seat,” said Lois, “Since John’s death, I’ve been helping take up the collection at the 11:30 a.m. Mass on Sunday. I feel I’m doing it for John,” she added. “It was the Mass he served for so many years. And I enjoy seeing people I know.”

Like John, who arrived for Mass early to set things up, Lois usually is at the cathedral by 11 a.m. The long-handled baskets used to take up the offering collection are unique to the cathedral, Lois thinks. An usher can reach parishioners seated in the middle of a pew.

“Sometimes I have to ask someone to assist when an usher can’t be there,” Lois related. “They often say they haven’t done it before and I say just leave enough room between you so you don’t jab each other. And if they don’t put anything in the basket, just bump them in the nose with it! But when I see the shocked look on his/her face, I add that I’m just joking.”

There have been instances when children have attempted to take money out of the basket instead of putting something in, she explained. And, children often are reluctant to let go of their money when they are given something to contribute by their parents.

Lois also is an extraordinary minister of the Eucharist, serving as the coordinator of the ministry. And she attends the 12:05 p.m. Mass in nearby St. Mother Theodore Guérin Chapel three times a week, serving as the proclaimer once a week. She also belongs to a rosary group at the cathedral that gathers at the funeral home to pray the rosary when a parishioner dies.

A native of Fort Wayne, Lois was an only child for 10 years until a brother and a sister were born. “Then my whole life changed,” she joked. She attended Most Precious Blood School and then briefly enrolled in Central Catholic High School until she took ill and had to drop out of school for several years. She finished her secondary education at Central High School across Clinton St. from Central Catholic.

Friends started bringing Lois to the cathedral long before she joined the parish in the early 1960s. She noticed John, she said, since he was ushering, and when she joined the Catholic Young Adult Club, she spotted him there, too.

“We dated off and on for a long time and finally married in 1960,” she related. The couple has a daughter and a son, both now living out of state. And Lois now has grandchildren with the birth of her son’s twin boys. “I feel doubly blessed,” she added.

Lois worked for 21 years at IBM and was a senior secretary when she retired. She’s an avid reader and belongs to a reading club. She meets monthly, except in the summertime, with the original members of a Triathlon Club formed 54 years ago. Lois belongs to her high-school reunion committee, a group of about 20 classmates who meet quarterly to plan a reunion every five years. They just held their 60th.

“I consider it a privilege to serve in these ministries and other activities,” Lois said. “They are but another service I can give.”

Lois Devine quips that a goal in her life essentially is to change the “e” to an “i” in her name to read: “Divine.”
Holy Cross Brother Donard Steffes turns 100

BY BROTHE R CHARLES MCBRIDE, CSC

NOTRE DAME — Holy Cross Brother Donard Steffes, will turn 100 on Wednesday, Dec. 10, and many say he is a model Holy Cross religious. He is up early each morning, a routine he’s led the past 70-plus years, spending time before the altar in the chapel of Columba Hall, the residence of the Brothers of Holy Cross, Midwest Province, at the University of Notre Dame.

Donard Louis Steffes was born in Carleton, Michigan, and grew up on the family farm. He attended a parochial school in nearby Maybee, Michigan, where the good sisters convinced him that he should be a Holy Cross Brother. He went to Sacred Heart Juniorate in Watertown, Wisconsin, for his formation as a Brother of Holy Cross, Midwest Province, at the University of Notre Dame.

He attended many workshops sponsored by the National Science Foundation to improve his teaching skills. He spent 20 years teaching at Archbishop Hoban High in Akron, Ohio. He and Holy Cross Brother Edwin Mattingly were famous for their many survival camping trips for students to the Boundary Waters in northern Minnesota.

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The power of a little foresight

I was reading a post in an online Catholic mom’s group to which I belong. A young mother was extremely frustrated. Actually, “livid” was her exact word. She had put her seven-year-old in charge of the four-year-old, three-year-old and one-year-old, and was trying to cook dinner. The baby got into the dog’s water dish, and the children started out playing together, but ran into the back bedroom and began jumping on the bed.

Mom pulled the children back near the baby and again instructed the seven-year-old to watch the one-year-old. In a few minutes, the baby had plopped the dog’s water out and was splashing in it. The kids started running around. Then the baby got mama’s purse, had unzipped it and was playing with lipstick and hand sanitizer. Whew! This made me really feel for this mom. All she was trying to do was cook some dinner for her family!

Mama was really, really frustrated, and I don’t blame her. A seven-year-old is absolutely capable of entertaining a one-year-old for 15 or so minutes under the watchful eye of mom. And four and three-year-olds can surely sit still for that amount of time and obey the instruction to play quietly. But upon pondering the situation for a few minutes, it seemed to me that mom had inadvertently set herself up for disaster.

Several things could have made the circumstance easier for this mom: Before she started cooking, the dog and its dish could have been put away in another room; the purse could have been put up high, out of reach of little hands. The baby could have been contained safely, perhaps in a crib or playpen with special toys only allowed her to play with. Or, strapped in a high chair with Cheerios or with a little background music and a spoon for pounding out the rhythm as no one year old can resist.

I don’t know exactly how mom instructed the children because her post didn’t say, but the best case would have been for her to get down on their level and make eye contact as she told them specifically what she wanted them to do in a peaceful, soft voice. Most importantly, she would exude calm because a mother’s demeanor sets the tone of the house.

EVEN EVERYDAY CATHOLIC

THERESA A. THOMAS

God’s mercy gives hope

Every day of Advent, however, is care-fully optimistic. This reading is grim in its predictions of dark days and of gloom. However, it is not predicting everlasting death. Bad things will happen. Difficult times will come. But, God will protect the faithful. In this last reassurance, the reading parallels the message of the first reading.


This reading quotes Isaiah. In this prophecy God pledged to send a representative to guide the people from death to life, from the deadly effects of sin. Gentle death was not simply earthy death but eternal death. And, inevitably, it leads to misery in life on earth.

These lessons, while unequivocal and admittedly dour, are not in the end terrifying or filled with doom. Instead, they remind us in all three readings that God’s mercy is overwhelming and unending. God’s mercy gives hope, because through God’s mercy’s sins are forgiven and everlasting life is acquired.

The key to obtaining this mercy personally is to recognize personal sin and repent. God never turns away a sincerely sorrowful sinner. Always, God’s love prevails. God, however, never drags us kicking and screaming into heaven. We must turn to God voluntarily, wholeheart-edly.

Advent calls us realize our situation. Our situation is that we need God, especially in our sinfulness. We need God’s mercy. We must seek it. We must repent.

EVEN EVERYDAY CATHOLIC

THERESA A. THOMAS

Light the candles, pour the wine: the Catholic call to celebrate

Grace Osterbauer was a 24-year-old bride-to-be when she took her first cake-decorating class, and the impulse coming out of her Fuchs beauty to make that $35 investment remains today, now a 40-year-old mother of eight.

“I wanted to make the Catholic events of our lives super special,” she said.

Grace and her husband, Paul, are both frugal, raised in homes where “celebrating was minimal,” Grace said. There’s a widely circulated story in Paul’s family about a grandma who made a business of light the candles at his daughter’s wedding reception until she and the groom arrived, hesitating to turn them longer than necessary.

A Great-Depression mentality be-cause of Grace’s family background and the legacy of God’s unceasing love as depicted in the book of Isaiah, God is seeking the “little,” the “least,” and often the “lost.”

The power of a little foresight and of God’s love. The power of a little foresight and of God’s love is proof of God’s existence — and the power of God’s love is a testament to God’s existence. God is love. God’s love is God’s mercy.

We can catch a whiff of heaven, a world that is whole, healed and joyous, where the celebration never ends.

EVERYDAY CATHOLIC

THERESA A. THOMAS

Light the candles, pour the wine: the Catholic call to celebrate

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December 7, 2014
Lessons from Dietrich von Hildebrand

Dietrich von Hildebrand (1889-1977) was a German Catholic philosopher, part of a circle of thinkers that first formed around Edmund Husserl, founder of the philosophical method known as “phenomenology.” Others in that circle included Max Scheler, on whom Karol Wojtyła (St. John Paul II) wrote his second doctoral thesis, and Edith Stein, now St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. The phenomenologists thought philosophy had become detached from reality, drifting into the quicksand of thinking-about-thinking-about-thinking. Their motto was “to the things themselves,” and their project was to reconnect thought to reality by a precise observation and analysis of Things As They Are.

Phenomenology, alas, also rates a special shrine in the philosophy wing of the Opacity of the Flame. The phenomenological method lends itself to a certain circularity, and a lot of patience is required to work through a dense phenomenological text — especially when the author is German. In my brief experience of him as a philosopher, Dietrich von Hildebrand was no exception to this rule.

Imagine my happy surprise, then, in discovering a collection of Hildebrand’s diary entries, published in 1953, explaining that “it is completely immaterial if the Antichrist refrains from attacking the Church for political reasons, or if he concludes a Concordat with the Vatican. What is decisive is the spirit that animates him, the heresy he represents, the crimes committed by his beheld. God is offended regardless of whether the victim of murder is a Jew, a Socialist, or a bishop. Blood that has been innocently spilled cries out to heaven.”

Why did intelligent Catholics in Germany and elsewhere find appeal to the siren-songs of German National Socialism? A close reading of Hildebrand’s diary suggests it was in part because they despised liberal democracy, which they regarded as “bourgeois” and deca
dent. And there certainly were elements of decadence, and aggressive secularism, in Germany’s inter-war Weimar Republic.

But a Catholic answer to the quandaries of political modernity was not going to be found in Hitler’s Third Reich (which some foolishly imagined the forerunner of some future New Holy Roman Empire) or in Mussolini’s Fascism (which some Catholics thought an expression of the “corporatism” exposed by Pius XI’s 1931 social encyclical, “Quadragesimo Anno”).

The answer was a democracy (even under a constitutional monarch) tethered to moral truth through a religiously-informed public philosophy drawn from Europe’s heritage of reason and revelation — from the legacies left to Europe by Athens and Jerusalem.

As I read the Hildebrand diaries, that option was not on the table when European Catholic intellectuals discussed the crisis of their continent during the Great Depression. That failure of imagination helped foster the catastrophes of the Holocaust and the Second World War, and helped pave the way toward Europe’s current moral-cultural sclerosis. There are lessons here for all, but especially for those “radical Catholics” tempted to turn practice into contempt for the democracy that once did so much good.

——

The Catholic Difference

GEORGE WEIGEL

Theresa Thomas is the wife of David and mother of seven. Watch for her newest book “Big Hearted Families” (Scepter) and read more on her blog: http://theresathomas.wordpress.com

SCRIPTURE SEARCH

Gospel for December 7, 2014

Mark 1:1-8

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the Second Sunday of Advent, Cycle B: the beginning of Mark’s account about Jesus Christ. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

Watch for her newest book “Big Hearted Families” (Scepter) and read more on her blog: http://theresathomas.wordpress.com

Answer Key can be found on page 15
TODAY’S CATHOLIC

Sports

St. Charles takes Thanksgiving tourney

BY MICHELLE CASTLEMAN

FORT WAYNE — With just eight players on her roster, Brooke Neuhaus, coach of the eighth-grade squad from St. Charles explained, “The Queen of Angels Tournament was a great way for our girls to get some games in.” Her Cardinals played four games in all over the Thanksgiving holiday weekend, winning each along the way to be crowned champions of this year’s preseason showdown.

Although she has been coaching at the high school level in different capacities for over 20 years, this is Neuhaus’ first year with this group.

“They are a good bunch of girls — very talented and work well together,” she added.

Assisted by her brother, Brad, she was very pleased with her team’s performance early in the season. “We were definitely more tired in the championship after the long weekend of play, but the girls did well keeping their composure even when they were down,” she detailed of the second meeting with St. Joseph-Hessen Cassel.

Like they did in the tournament opener, St. Charles ended up beating the Squires, but this time, by just three points, 37-34.

Over the three days, guard Jayda Smith led the scoring for the Cardinals chalking up 25 points in the final game. Sophia Talarico and Taylor Russell added solid defensive play, while Bridgette Black and Krystka Bugajski controlled the boards. St. Charles never lost a beat with play off the bench from Hailie Markiton, Veronika Miller and Mary Carroll.

“Each girl contributed by hustling after the ball and doing whatever we asked of them all weekend,” Neuhaus summarized.

The girls have several non-CYO games scheduled for week night play, but officially kick off the CYO season on Saturday, Dec. 6.

St. Joseph-Hessen Cassel also made it to the championship game on the boys’ side, coming out of the losers’ bracket to face St. Jude a second time. But it was the Eagles who claimed this year’s title going 4-0 to remain undefeated for the tournament.

BY MICHELLE CASTLEMAN

Eighth-grader Bridgette Black from St. Charles goes in for a lay up against St. Joseph-Hessen Cassel in the opening round game of the annual Queen of Angels Invitational held at the University of Saint Francis over the Thanksgiving holiday.

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Franciscan Music releases Marian CD

Just in time for Christmas, Franciscan Music is releasing their latest CD entitled “Hail Queen of Heaven, the Ocean Star.” It is dedicated to the Blessed Mother and features 17 inspiring songs, containing perennial favorites such as “Hail Mary,” “Gentle Woman,” “Immaculate Mary,” and more.

Father Bob Lengerich, pastor of St. Dominic Parish in Bremen, and Stacie Tepe, cantor at St. Bavo in Mishawaka, are the vocalists. This is Father Lengerich’s fourth CD with Franciscan Music and Stacie’s sixth. Joe Higginbotham, the director of liturgy and music at St. Bavo Parish, is the producer of the CD.

Immaculee Ilibagiza, New York Times best-selling author of the book, “Left to Tell,” also has a song on the track entitled, “Let Your Will Be Done,” that she composed and sings herself. Assistant Director of Liturgy and Music and Franciscan Music’s executive director, Father Bob Lengerich, with the help of Father Con-Higginbotham, they decided to work together to create this CD, filled with the traditional hymns that McMillan hoped for, plus a few more contemporary pieces.

The recording is available for $9.99 from FranciscanMusic.com, the Cathedral Bookstore in Fort Wayne and Divine Mercy Books in South Bend. It can also be ordered through iTunes for $8.99. Past Christmas CD’s, “O Come, All Ye Faithful!” and “Christmas at Grecco” are also available for the same price.

For more information contact jo@FranciscanMusic.com or call 574-514-0395.

McMillan is underwriting the project. McMillan has a deep devotion to the Blessed Mother, and has long desired a recording of traditional Marian hymns. After a chance meeting with Higginbotham, they decided to work together to create this CD, filled with the traditional hymns that McMillan hoped for, plus a few more contemporary pieces.

Recently published books that have been sent to Today’s Catholic can touch the fancy of Catholic and non-Catholic readers alike. Each review includes publisher name and ISBN number for ease of purchase at your local Catholic bookstore.


Last year’s Marian CD from Franciscan Music, “Our Lady: Mother and Pariah,” has been an inspiring work for Catholic and non-Catholic readers alike. The CD includes Marian hymns and devotions filled with the traditional hymns that McMillan hoped for, plus a few more contemporary pieces.

The recording is available for $9.99 from FranciscanMusic.com, the Cathedral Bookstore in Fort Wayne and Divine Mercy Books in South Bend. It can also be ordered through iTunes for $8.99. Past Christmas CD’s, “O Come, All Ye Faithful!” and “Christmas at Grecco” are also available for the same price.

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Catholic Business Network Group Fort Wayne — The Catholic Business Network Group will meet Friday, Dec. 5, beginning with Mass at 7 a.m. in the St. Mother Theodore Guérin Chapel. Mass will be followed by guest speaker Madeline Nugent with the Confraternity of Penitents. Refreshments provided by Darrel Dodane with the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

Children’s Adoration Roanoke — St. Joseph Church will have children’s Adoration Sunday, Dec. 7, from 4-5 p.m. All ages are welcome, even babies. The rosary, Stations of the Cross, songs, Scripture and prayer time will be offered. Contact Tim and Shirley Sorg at 260-638-4562 for information.

Men’s prayer breakfast planned South Bend — All Catholic men, young and old are invited to a men’s prayer breakfast following the 8 a.m. Mass at St. Therese Little Flower Church, 5419 Ironwood Rd., Saturday Dec. 6. Brother Roy E. Smith, CSC, will speak on Habitats For Humanity of St. Joseph County. Donations are appreciated but not necessary. Call Joe at 574-261-7938 for information.

Knights plan fish fry South Bend — The Knights of Columbus Council 5521, 61533 S. Ironwood Dr., will have a fish fry on Friday, Dec. 5, from 5-7 p.m. Adults $8.50, children 5-12 $3.50. Shrimp for $9 and chicken strips for $8.50 will be available.

Rosary Society Christmas candy and bake sale Fort Wayne — Most Precious Blood Church, 1515 Barthold St. will have a Christmas candy and bake sale Saturday, Dec. 13, from 9 a.m. to noon in the church basement. 222 W. Mishawaka Ave. Cookies will be sold for $5 per pound.

Our Lady of Guadalupe celebration planned Fort Wayne — St. Joseph Parish will celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Friday, Dec. 12, at the church located at Brooklyn and Hale. Las Mananitas will be held at 5 a.m. followed by hot chocolate and cookies. Mass will begin at 6 p.m. and will include Aztec dancers, children’s choir, Our Lady of Guadalupe play and announcement of coloring contest winners. A potluck dinner will be held in the school following Mass. Bring a dish to share. Beverages will be provided. For students preschool and up, pick up coloring sheets for contest from the back of the church or the school office. Return by Wednesday, Dec. 10 for judging.

Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass planned Notre Dame — A special bi-lingual Mass with Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades will celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Friday, Dec. 12, at 5:15 p.m. in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart. Join in prayer and song with the Notre Dame Folk Choir, Coro Primavera de Nuestra Senora, Mariachi ND and Ballet Folklorico.

Eucharist party planned Auburn — The Immaculate Conception Parish Knights of Columbus will have a eucharist party Saturday, Dec. 6 at 6:30 p.m. at the church, 500 E. and Seventh St. Cost is $5 per person. Call 260-925-0612 for information.

Friends of St. Patrick celebrate with lessons and carols Lagro — The Friends of St. Patrick will host a Festival of Lessons and Carols Saturday, Dec. 6, at 3 p.m. at the church. Refreshments will follow the traditional event.

Notre Dame, Saint Mary’s alumni clubs join for holiday gathering Fort Wayne — A Mass will be held Sunday, Dec. 14, at 2 p.m. for the Notre Dame and Saint Mary’s College alumni clubs at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, 10070 Aboite Ctr. Rd. Appetizers will follow in the parish hall. RSVP at eventbrite.com.

REST IN PEACE

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Violet A. Derloshon, 90, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
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Arthur C. Freiricks, 87, St. John the Baptist
Dennis A. Girardot, 73, St. Joseph-Hessen CasSEL
Michael Baron, 71, Our Lady of Good Hope
Christopher O. Brough, 67, St. John the Baptist
Theresa C. Hoot, 45, St. Vincent de Paul
Paul P. O’Boyle, 83, Most Precious Blood
Goshen James E. Yahne, 78, St. John the Evangelist
Granger Matthew Riley, 23, St. Pius X
Huntington Rita M. Borton, 85, Ss. Peter and Paul
Rev. Thrift, 60, Ss. Peter and Paul
Mishawaka Daniel J. McGuinness, 43, Queen of Peace
Rachel M. Schafer, 86, St. Monica
Notre Dame Thomas J. Mason, 82, Basilica of the Sacred Heart
Robert E. Rodes Jr., 87, Basilica of the Sacred Heart
South Bend George F. Meyers Sr., 74, Christ the King
Grace R. Lackner, 85, St. Jude
Florence D. Martin, 78, Our Lady of Hungary
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www.catholic-cemetery.org

Promotion ends December 12, 2014.
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

After celebrating Mass at the Basilica of Sant’ Andrea della Valle, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades gathered with students in the Saint Mary’s Rome Program. In the back is Deacon Royce Gregerson, a seminarian of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend studying in Rome. In the photo, at left of Bishop Rhoades, is Portia Prebys, director of the Rome Program and a native of South Bend. Grace Urankar, Saint Mary’s class of 2014, stands to the left of Prebys in the photo. Saint Mary’s College President Carol Ann Mooney stands right of Bishop Rhoades.

Mooney said she was thankful for all of the support in the project. “It has been much appreciated and it’s awesome to see everyone at home as excited as we are,” she said.

Grace Urankar shared, “It was really incredible to be in St. Peter’s Square and so close to the pope himself. I’m sure anyone who goes to an audience would say this, but it was such a testament to the universal Church.”

“Pilgrims from all over the world were present, and the pope’s reflection was summarized in at least 10 languages after he read it in Italian,” Urankar added. “I was really struck by what a small group we were in the presence of so many, but I had to focus on all the women we were representing.”

Elizabeth Groppe, director of the Center for Spirituality, reported 225 contributions to the project, including 10 students and three alums from Saint Mary’s College. Fifteen other Catholic-affiliated organization, including Catholic and secular colleges and universities and Newman Catholic Communities from across the country, participated.

There were also some letters from women with no affiliation with any particular school.

One Saint Mary’s alumna sent a poem, “My Church, My Home.” She gave voice to the caring relationships and bonds of communion that flow from the worship of God and sharing of the sacrament of the Eucharist.

Groppe related another woman who had shared that she was sexually abused in high school and developed an eating disorder. In the aftermath of this, she attended a Kairos retreat that renewed her relationship with God and enabled her to discover her leadership abilities. Through the community of women in the Catholic campus ministry program at her college, she found hope, focus, meaning and direction. She recommends that the Catholic Church would provide all teenage women in parishes with the opportunity to have a woman mentor.

Students at Saint Ursula Academy in Cincinnati hand made a stole as a gift for Pope Francis. Their letters spoke some of the challenges teenage women face in the culture today, including media images of women that establish false ideals of beauty that are impossible to meet, degrading language about women in the lyrics of popular music, degrading and objectifying images of women in advertising, films and other media. Some wrote about the lack of confidence, depression and eating disorders that many teenage women experience. They also made recommendations for ways in which the Catholic community can work to foster a culture of respect for women in the United States.

November 26 marked Bishop Rhoades’ birthday and his second meeting with Pope Francis. Earlier in the week Bishop Rhoades concelebrated Mass with Pope Francis at Domus Sanctae Marthae, where the pope resides, and then greeted Pope Francis after Mass. The pope extended a blessing on the priests and faithful of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.