Rite of Candidacy celebrated for future Hispanic Deacons

BY DENISE FEDOROW

WARSAW — Sunshine streamed through the windows of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church and Diocesan Shrine in Warsaw on Saturday, Jan. 17, as 11 men were admitted into candidacy for the Hispanic Diaconate with a special Mass and rite celebrated by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades.

The 11 men — including Juan Campos, St. Patrick, Ligonier; Marco Castillo, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Warsaw; Fred Everett, Corpus Christi, South Bend; Alejandro Garcia, Our Lady of Hungary, South Bend; Ricardo Garcia, St. Patrick, Ligonier; Giovani Muñoz, Christian Nieves and Blas Olaya, all from St. John the Evangelist, Goshen; Jose Ruvalcaba, St. Aldabert, South Bend; and Victor Sandoval and Huberto Vasquez, both from St. Patrick in Fort Wayne — just completed a year of aspirancy and will now enter into three years of formation as candidates.

The four areas of diaconal formation are: human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral.

The candidates — along with their wives — meet for 10 weekends per year at Lindenwood Retreat and Conference Center in Donaldson for classes and prayer. Many of the teachers for the program are from the University of Notre Dame’s theology department.

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Catholic and Episcopal bishops lead prayers for Christian unity

BY CHRIS LUSHIS

SOUTH BEND — On the evening of Jan. 18 at St. Matthew Cathedral, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend and Episcopal Bishop Edward S. Little of the Diocese of Northern Indiana joined together in common fellowship for an ecumenical prayer service to initiate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

Bishop Rhoades served as the main celebrant for the Vespers, asking that “the Lord bless us and the Church, that we may be united in our Baptism as brothers and sisters in Christ.” He acknowledged that true unity is only possible through the work of God. “By our own efforts, our own works, we cannot achieve peace. It is only through the gifts of the Holy Spirit that this will be possible; that is why we are here this evening.”

Throughout the service, cantor Alicia Nagy from St. Matthew Parish led Psalms and hymns of praise, in the hope of unity. A combined choir from St. Matthew and the Episcopal Cathedral Church of St. James accompanied Nagy.

Bishop Little offered the sermon for the event, first acknowledging both his gratitude to Bishop Rhoades and the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend for their hospitality and graciousness.

He exclaimed that “acknowledging this friendship provides a sound foundation to remind us that we come together in prayer so that the Lord will make us one. It also signifies that we have unfinished business, specifically to welcome one another as Christ has welcomed each of us — and to do so for the greater glory of God.”

His sermon focused on words from the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, written in 1714, a time where divisions between Puritans, Anglicans and Catholics were felt very deeply. This prayer invoked the name of “Jesus, as our only Savior, the Prince of Peace” to “give us grace, seriously, to weigh to heart the great danger we are in by
Serving the Gospel of Life with love, courage, and enthusiasm

BY BISHOP KEVIN C. RHOADES

Following is the homily given by Bishop Rhoades at the January 22nd Mass for diocesan participants in the March for Life at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.

I t is wonderful to gather here in the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception on this day after the national March for Life. I thank all of you who came to Washington to bear witness to the sanctity of human life, particularly my brothers and sisters from the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. One of our former bishops, Archbishop John Noll, was responsible for the raising of funds to build this beautiful National Shrine. And it is in this house of Mary that we gather in prayer this morning, asking our Blessed Mother’s intercession for the cause of life, for an end to abortion, and for a new culture of life in our nation.

We just heard the Gospel of the appointment of the Twelve Apostles. Saint Mark tells us that Jesus “appointed Twelve, whom he also named Apostles, that they might be with him and he might send them forth to preach and have authority to drive out demons.” Saint Mark then listed the names of the twelve apostles. I invite you to read that list and then add your name to the list. Why? Because this is our vocation too. Jesus has appointed you and me “to be with him” and He sends us forth to bear witness to Him in the world. Now it’s true that we do this according to our particular state-in-life vocations. A bishop is a successor of the apostles in the full sense of possessing apostolic authority. But in a more general sense, all the baptized are apostles. The name “apostle” means “one who is sent.”

Pope Francis has been emphasizing this mission of going out, going forth, into the world. The Holy Father is very critical of a self-referential Church, one that just looks at and serves itself. He is insistently teaching us that the Church must go out, must be missionary, and he says that this is the mission of every Christian, to be a missionary disciple. The Holy Father never tires of teaching us, and showing us by his example, that we must especially go out to those on the margins or peripheries of society; to the poor, the marginalized, the needy, the suffering, and the vulnerable.

Regarding our care for the vulnerable, Pope Francis writes in Evangelii Gaudium: “Among the vulnerable for whom the Church wishes to care with particular love and concern are unborn children, the most defenseless and innocent among us. Nowadays efforts are made to deny them their human dignity and to do with them whatever one pleases, taking their lives and passing laws preventing anyone from standing in the way of this. Frequently, as a way of ridiculing the Church’s effort to defend their lives, attempts are made to present her position as ideological, obscurantist and conservative. Yet this defense of unborn life is closely linked to the defense of each and every other human right. It involves the conviction that a human being is always sacred and inviolable, in any situation and at every stage of development. Human beings are ends in themselves and never a means of resolving other problems.”

As we think about the vocation of the apostles and our vocation as missionary disciples, the Gospel we are to bring is the Gospel of life. There is no other Gospel. It is the Gospel of Jesus, the Gospel of love and grace. Pope Francis says: “Anyone who is Christian has a duty to bear witness to the Gospel: to protect life courageously and lovingly in all its phases.” Notice the adverbs: courageously and lovingly. Truth and charity! Never one without the other! We must reject “false compassion.” Pope Francis says: “The predominant school of thought sometimes leads to ‘false compassion’ which holds that it is a benefit to women to promote abortion; an act of dignity to perform euthanasia; a scientific breakthrough to ‘produce’ a child, considered as a right rather than a gift to be welcomed; or to using human lives as laboratory animals, allegedly in order to save others.” No, these are falsehoods. True compassion is rooted in the truth about the dignity of all human life. Fidelity to the Gospel calls us to love life always and in every stage and condition as a gift from God. Fidelity to the Gospel also calls us to show mercy and bring healing to women and men harmed by the wounds of an abortion.

Today we are celebrating the feast of a recently canonized American saint who was a heroic witness to the Gospel of life, Saint Marianne Cope. This religious superior of the Sisters of Saint Francis of Syracuse, New York, responded to a request to go to Hawaii to care for leprosy patients. She responded with enthusiasm and without fear. She and other sisters managed a hospital for lepers in Honolulu and also a home to care for the daughters of patients with leprosy. Later, when Father Damien of Molokai, the Apostle to Lepers, contracted the disease, Mother Marianne went to Molokai to care for him and other outcasts on the island. She continued Father Damien’s work on Molokai after he died, an incredibly difficult ministry. Mother Marianne served with serenity and trust in God and allayed the other sisters’ fear of catching leprosy. She was totally devoted to the lepers, seeing each of them as beloved children of God. She bore witness to the Gospel of life by serving Jesus in the person of the lepers. She put her own life and health at risk to live to the full God’s call to love the suffering and abandoned. She became their mother and has been called “the mother of lepers.” When he canonized her in 2012, Pope Benedict said: “At a time when little could be done for those suffering from this terrible disease, Marianne Cope showed the highest love, courage and enthusiasm. She is a shining and energetic example of the best of the tradition of Catholic nursing sisters and of the spirit of her beloved Saint Francis.”

I am glad that we’re celebrating the feast of Saint Marianne Cope today. Because what we need in our pro-life efforts is what Mother Marianne exemplified: love, courage, and enthusiasm. That’s what we need as missionary disciples, as apostles. May the Lord help us to serve the Gospel of life with love, courage, and enthusiasm! May the Blessed Virgin Mary and Saint Marianne Cope intercede for us!
Pope, at Mass with millions, tells Filipinos to protect the family

**BY FRANCIS X. ROCOA**

**MANILA, Philippines (CNS) —** Pope Francis told a crowd of an estimated 6 million gathered in a Manila park to protect the family “against insidious attacks and programs contrary to all that we hold true and sacred, all that is most beautiful and noble in our culture.”

The pope’s homily at the Jan. 18 Mass also reprised several other themes he had sounded during the four-day visit, including environmental problems, poverty and corruption.

Despite continuous rain, the congregation in Rizal Park began to assemble the night before the afternoon celebration. Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle of Manila canceled other Masses throughout the archdiocese to enhance turnout. The crowd was so dense in spots that people passed hosts to fellow worshippers unable to reach priests distributing Communion.

The government estimated the total crowd size at 6-7 million people. According to the Vatican spokesman, Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, that would be the largest number of people ever to gather to see a pope.

A Mass with St. John Paul II in the same place 20 years earlier is believed to have drawn 4-5 million people, often described as the largest live crowd in history.

The Mass was celebrated on Santo Nino Day, or the feast of the Holy Child Jesus, one of the most popular feast days in the Philippines. Many of those who walked great distances down closed roads to get to Rizal Park held statues of Santo Nino.

For his final scheduled public talk in the country, Pope Francis stuck to his prepared English text and did not improvise in Spanish, as he had done at several emotional points during the visit. Yet his voice rose with emphasis during the passage about protecting the family.

Those words echoed his warning, during a Jan. 16 meeting with Filipino families, against “ideological colonization that tries to destroy the family” through such practices as same-sex marriage and contraception.

In his homily, Pope Francis said Christians “need to see each child as a gift to be welcomed, cherished and protected. And we need to care for our young people, not allowing them to be robbed of hope and condemned to life on the streets.”

The pope praised the Philippines, whose population is more than 80 percent Catholic, as the “foremost Catholic country in Asia,” and said its people, millions of whom work abroad, are “called to be outstanding missionaries of the faith in Asia.”

Yet he warned the developing nation, one of Asia’s fastest-growing economies, against temptations of materialism, saying the devil “hides his snares behind the appearance of sophistication, the allure of being modern, like everyone else. He distracts us with the promise of ephemeral pleasures, superficial pastimes. And so we squander our God-given gifts by tinkering with gadgets; we squander our money on gambling and drink.”

Pope Francis, who had urged a group of young people earlier in the day to address the challenge of climate change through dedication to the environment, told Mass-goers human sinfulness had “disfigured (the) natural beauty of creation.

Other consequences of sin, the pope said, were “social structures which perpetuate poverty, ignorance and corruption,” problems he had emphasized in his Jan. 16 speech at Manila’s presidential palace.

The Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades has made the following deacon assignment:

**Deacon Louis J. Giovanniello** to Saint Pius X, Granger, effective January 25, 2015.
Pope urges Filipino families: Dream, resist ‘ideological colonization’

BY FRANCIS X. ROCCA

PASAY CITY, Philippines (CNS) — Pope Francis urged Catholic families to dream of how they might fulfill the will of God, while resisting “ideological colonization that tries to destroy the family” through such practices as contraception and same-sex marriage.

The pope spoke Jan. 16 to a meeting of families at the Mall of Asia Arena, which was filled to its capacity of 20,000 people. The arena reverberated with people crying out “We love you Lolo Kiko” (Grandpa Kiko, the Filipino nickname for Francisco) as the pope walked the red carpet, stopping to touch the faithful and bless families who were among those representing the 86 dioceses of the country.

Commenting on a reading from the Gospel of St. Matthew, in which St. Joseph twice learns God’s will for the Holy Family from an angel in a dream, Pope Francis said dreaming could serve an analogous purpose in ordinary Christian families.

“I very much like this idea of dreaming in a family,” the pope said. “Every mother and father dream of their son or daughter in the womb for nine months. Isn’t that true? You dream of how your son or daughter might be. It isn’t possible to have a family without such dreams. When you lose this capacity to dream, you lose the capacity and energy to love.”

Pope Francis said that true dreams could provide solutions to family problems and reveal the good qualities of one’s husband or wife. Then he added, to much laughter from the audience: “Don’t ever lose the dream of when you were boyfriend and girlfriend. Very important, that.”

But the pope noted that St. Joseph’s dreams also revealed the “dangers, which threatened Jesus and Mary, forcing them to flee to Egypt and then to settle in Nazareth. So too, in our time, God calls upon us to recognize the dangers threatening our own families and to protect them from harm.”

First among these dangers, Pope Francis said, was what he called an “ideological colonization that tries to destroy the family.”

“It is not born of the dream that we have with God from prayer, or from the mission that God gives us; it comes from outside, and that’s why I say it is colonization,” the pope said, adding that it referred to “materialism and lifestyles which are destructive of family life and the most basic demands of Christian morality.”

Pope Francis went on to say that the “family is also threatened by growing efforts on the part of some to redefine the very institution of marriage, by relativism, by the culture of the ephemeral, by a lack of openness to life.”

The pope praised Blessed Paul VI for his 1968 encyclical “Humanae Vitae,” which affirmed Catholic moral teaching against contraception, though he noted that it also instructed confessors to show “compassion in particular cases” of penitents who had failed to follow the teaching.

Blessed Paul “saw the threat of the destruction of the family by depriving it of children. Paul VI was courageous, he was a good pastor, and he warned his sheep about the wolves that were approaching.”

In 2012, the Philippine government passed a “Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act,” providing for government funding of contraception.

Discussing the term “ideological colonization” with reporters after the event, Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle of Manila noted that African bishops had told him foreign aid to their countries was sometimes offered on the condition that they accept “alien” views of sexuality and marriage.

At the arena, the Argentine-born pope invoked the rhetoric of anti-imperialist revolution to encourage his Asian listeners: “Just as our people arrived at the maturity to say no in the period of colonization, we families have to be very wise and strong, with the fortitude to say no to these initiatives of colonization that could destroy the family.”

Pope Francis called on Catholic families to be “sanctuaries of respect for life, proclaiming the sacredness of every human life, from conception to natural death.”

The pope also urged the audience to care for the needy, particularly orphans and the elderly, offering as inspiration a home for rescued street children he had visited earlier the same day.

During his talk, the pope repeatedly departed from his prepared English text to improvise in his native Spanish, communicating with the audience with the aid of an interpreter. The references to dreaming and ideological colonization occurred when he was speaking off the cuff.

“It is really a timely reminder from the Holy Father,” said Arnel Santos of Cainta, Philippines. “That to be able to recapture our capacity to dream for our families again we should be resting in the Lord. That means to pray always.”

Santos and his wife have busy schedules as attorneys also raising two children. He told CNS they “pursue their profession a lot,” and it became easy over 18 years of marriage to “lose sight of the essentials.”

Parents pursuing careers and also trying to get better-paying work overseas has been a major concern of the Church in the Philippines, and the pope heard from one woman whose family has been virtually split since the third year of her marriage.

Ediza Pumarada has been married to her husband, who works in Singapore, for 22 years.

“The psychological and emotional burdens were difficult to bear in spite of the earnings that working abroad brought our family,” she said in a speech.

“Homesickness and loneliness set in. My adjustments as a wife, left alone to take care of our daughter, assuming both the roles of being father and the mother for her, was a real challenge for me. Keeping our loving relationship and our trust for each other, in spite of our separation, was even more challenging.”

The pope also heard from a deaf husband, whose wife is also deaf.

The man spoke of the difficulties of living in virtual isolation, if not for the help they received from their hearing children, who often sign for them.

Contributing to this story was Simone Orendain.
Indiana Catholic Conference persists in effort to ban death penalty

INDIANAPOLIS — A bill to revoke Indiana’s death penalty stalled at the gate as Hoosier lawmakers decided against giving the ban a chance to move. The Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC), the Indiana bishops’ official representative for public policy matters in Indiana, has a long record of working to repeal the death penalty in favor of granting convicted persons a sentence of life imprisonment without the possibility of parole as the preferred option.

Glenn Tebbe who serves as the executive director for the ICC explained that the Church’s rationale for a death penalty ban is twofold. Tebbe said it deals not only with the consequences of the here and now for protecting society, but also looks at the hereafter.

“The Church recognizes the state’s right to execute criminals, the state has the ability to protect society from violent criminals, the state has the ability to protect itself from an aggressor. Utilization of the death penalty is not necessary when there are other appropriate means of punishment. We join the author of this bill in his effort to prevent and address the horrendous act, which this bill identifies. While we join in your condemnation of this behavior, we believe there are more moral ways in which to seek restitution.”

According to the Catholic Mobilizing Network, a national organization working to end capital punishment, 18 states including the District of Columbia have abolished the death penalty. In recent years, some states have repealed use of the death penalty because of the costs. A report by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) said the state of New Jersey abolished its death penalty in 2007 largely because the state had spent $254,000,000 on death penalty since 1978, executing 13 criminals.

In Indiana, a 2015 fiscal report by the non-partisan Legislative Services Agency found that the average cost of a death penalty trial is 10 times more costly, over $500,000. In contrast, the same study found that the average trial for a life-without-parole case costs around $50,000.

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Visit saintmarys.edu/seeing for program details and registration.

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Visit saintmarys.edu/seeing for program details and registration.

Death Penalty Resources include:

Pope Francis Statement calling for an end to the death penalty and life in prison. “A Culture of Life and the Death Penalty: A Statement of the USCCB calling for the End of the Use of the Death Penalty in the United States”; “No Justice, No Healing, No Closure” a document and YouTube video produced by the Indiana Catholic Conference; and the Catholic Mobilizing Network can be found at catholicsmobilizing.org

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Pope’s canonization announcement surprises even Serra’s promoters

BY PATRICIA ZAPOR

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Surprising even the people who have been promoting the sainthood cause of Blessed Junipero Serra, Pope Francis announced Jan. 15 that in September, he hopes to canonize the 18th-century Spanish Franciscan who founded a string of missions across Mexico and California.

Blessed Serra is credited with directly founding nine missions in California, one in Baja California in Mexico and with reinvigorating established missions in Mexico.

Friars under his tutelage founded many others across California, in territory that was then part of New Spain.

The announcement came when Pope Francis, aboard a flight from Sri Lanka to the Philippines, explained to reporters his decision to canonize Joseph Vaz, a 17th- and 18th-century missionary to Sri Lanka, bypassing the usual process, including verification of a second miracle attributed to the saint’s intercession.

On this flight from Manila to Rome, Pope Francis said his September trip to the U.S. — including stops in New York and Washington — where he will take him to Philadelphia, New York and Washington — where he intends to canonize Blessed Junipero Serra — but probably no other stops.

Pope Francis made his remarks Jan. 19, in an hourlong news conference with reporters accompanying him back to Rome from a two-weeklong trip to Asia.

After announcing he would canonize Blessed Junipero in the U.S. in September, the pope said he wished he could do so in California, the 18th-century Franciscan’s mission field, but would not have time to travel there.

The pope said he planned instead to perform the canonization ceremony at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, saying Washington would be a fitting location because a statue of Blessed Junipero stands in the U.S. Capitol.

The pope also confirmed he would visit the United Nations in New York. He had already announced his participation in the late-September World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia.

Asked about widespread speculation that he would visit the U.S.-Mexico border on the same trip, Pope Francis said “entering the United States by crossing the border from Mexico would be a beautiful thing, as a sign of brotherhood and of help to the immigrants.” But he said making such a visit would raise expectations that he would visit Mexico’s shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, and he joked that “war could break out” if he failed to do so.

“There will be time to go to Mexico later on,” he said.

However, sources familiar with the trip planning have noted that plans submitted to the Vatican are not always approved, and Pope Francis’ comments about the canonization of Blessed Junipero indicated not all plans are finalized.

The vice postulator for Blessed Serra’s sainthood cause, Father John Vaughn, told Catholic News Service he was taken completely by surprise by the pope’s announcement.

Even among the friars at Mission Santa Barbara, where he lives, “I was the last to know,” he said.

Father Vaughn said he had heard that Pope Francis considered Blessed Serra to have already met the sainthood criteria because of the way he brought the Catholic faith to California and the native populations. But that the pope was ready to move on canonizing the friar came as a total surprise, he said.

The announcement is “a great honor for the province,” Father Vaughn said. “We’ve always looked to Serra as the ideal for how to preach the Gospel, as he said ‘always go forward, never look back.’

Blessed Serra was born in the village of Petra on the Spanish island Mallorca Nov. 24, 1713. After entering the Franciscans, he obtained a doctorate in sacred theology at the National University of Blessed Ramon Lull and developed a career as an academic and acclaimed preacher in Spain. At the age of 36, he volunteered to go to the New World, to Mexico.

As noted in a biography of Blessed Serra on the website of the California-based Santa Barbara Province of the Franciscans, the friar first was assigned to the remote Sierra Gorda region, in what is now the state of Queretaro, where he worked among the Pame Indians, some of whom had already been converted to Catholicism. He then spent another decade clearing central Mexico, preaching.

In 1758, he was appointed to head up a group of Spanish Franciscans sent to evangelize and colonize “Baja” and “Alta” California. He personally established nine missions in what is now the state of California, beginning with Mission San Diego de Alcala in present-day San Diego. He supervised the Franciscans who founded 12 more California missions.

He died at age 70 Aug. 28, 1784, and is buried at Mission San Carlos Borromeo in Carmel, California. He was beatified in Rome Sept. 25, 1988, by Pope John Paul II.

Steven Hackel, a history professor at University of California at Riverside who has written a biography, “Junipero Serra: California’s Founding Father,” told CNS he thinks of Blessed Serra as one of the little-heralded “founding fathers” of the United States. Though he was a contemporary of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, the priest and other missionaries who settled areas beyond the East Coast were crucial to the development of the nation as well.

“Every region had its missionaries who were founding fathers of another sort,” Hackel said.

Although California fourth-graders study Blessed Serra’s accomplishments in social studies classes, Hackel said he and the other missionary founding fathers are often ignored in history textbooks. He said he hopes new attention to Blessed Serra will change that.

At the time of Blessed Serra’s beatification, protesters demonstrated against the action and spray-painted graffiti on the walls of a San Diego museum named for the friar. Critics, including representatives of Native Americans, said Blessed Serra brutalized Native Americans and suppressed Indian culture.

A 1986 report by the Diocese of Monterey, California, defended Blessed Serra, saying his reputation had been attacked “without proof or documentation.”

Francis Rocca contributed to this story.

Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend seeks Director of Secretariat for Communications

The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend is seeking a director for the Secretariat of Communications. This communications director develops, implements and maintains a wide range of public relations activities from the Fort Wayne diocesan office. The candidate will manage a team of seven employees and oversee the department budget.

The communications director will prepare media campaigns; develop and maintain communication plans for the diocese; write news releases and reports; coordinate web page content, social media, the televised Mass and in-house video production.

Candidate must be a Catholic in good standing.

A communication degree or a communication-related field preferred with a background in marketing helpful.

For an expanded job description contact Mari Raatz at mraatz@diocesefwsb.org.

Resumes may be sent to the attention of Msgr. Robert Schulte at mraatz@diocesefwsb.org by Feb. 2, 2015.

“Nothing is ever too much to do for a child.”

-Mary Virginia Merrick, Founder of the Christ Child Society

The Christ Child Society of Fort Wayne invites you to participate in our 2015 Baby Bottle Fundraising Campaign! Please remember to take a bottle from a Christ Child Society member or volunteer after Mass this weekend. Please return it February 14-15, filled with your loose pocket change. What a great way to show your love for the babies and children of our community! (If you are unable to obtain a Baby Bottle, please consider filling your own container and returning it on February 14-15.)
In October 2015, representative bishops from around the world will meet with Pope Francis in the XIV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops to consider the topic: The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and Contemporary World. The Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in October 2014 was a preparation for the October 2015 Synod. It issued a document called the “Relatio Synodi” that contains proposed reflections in preparation for the 2015 Ordinary Synod. Bishops throughout the world have been asked to consult with the faithful of their dioceses regarding the reflections contained in the “Relatio Synodi” and then to present a report to the Episcopal Conference. The Episcopal Conference will then send a summary report to the Holy See, which will then prepare the “Working Document” (“Instrumentum Laboris”) for the October 2015 Synod.

I must send my report from our diocese to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in March. I wish to invite the faithful of our diocese to send to me their thoughts and opinions after prayerfully reflecting on the “Relatio Synodi,” which is posted on our diocesan website and is printed here in this Jan. 25, issue of Today’s Catholic. I am open to any thoughts, opinions and suggestions that people wish to share with me. You can do so online by going to our diocesan website (www.diocesefwsb.org). I ask that all input be sent by Feb. 25 so we have time to reflect on the results to prepare my report to the USCCB. I have prepared some specific questions that I offer for your reflection in light of the reflections contained in the “Relatio Synodi.”

The survey questions are:

I. Part I of the “Relatio Synodi” presents the Context and Challenges of the Family in the world today.

1. What do you see as the biggest challenges in our culture today to living the Church’s teaching on marriage and family life?
2. How can the Church better address these challenges and assist persons in living the full commitment of marriage and the values of the Christian family?

II. Part II of the “Relatio Synodi” looks at the Gospel of the Family — what revelation tells about the beauty, the role, and the dignity of the family. It stresses the need for a renewed proclamation of the Gospel of the Family.

3. What new ways can the Church use to promote the vocation and mission of marriage and the family?
4. What initiatives can lead people to understand the value of an indissoluble and fruitful marriage as the path to complete personal fulfillment?
5. How can the Church offer assistance to persons in living the Church’s teaching on the family?
6. How can families themselves be agents of evangelization in the world?
7. How can people be helped to understand that no one is beyond the mercy of God? More specifically, how can this truth be expressed in the Church’s pastoral activity towards wounded and fragile families?

III. Part III of the “Relatio Synodi” focuses on confronting the situation to discern ways the Church can pastorally care for those in various concrete situations.

8. How can the Church proclaim the Gospel of the Family in a bold and more insistent manner?
9. How can the Church improve its guidance of engaged couples in their preparation for marriage and especially involve a greater commitment of the entire Christian community in this preparation?
10. How can the Church better accompany married couples in the initial years of marriage?
11. How can the Church provide pastoral care to couples who are united in a civil marriage or who live together outside marriage, guiding them on a path of growth and conversion towards the Sacrament of Matrimony?
12. How can the Church provide care for wounded families (separated; divorced and not remarried; divorced and remarried; single-parent families)?
13. How can the Church give pastoral care and attention to persons with homosexual tendencies and to their families?
14. How can the Church promote the beauty and dignity of becoming a mother or father and the openness of couples to the loving task of transmitting human life and raising children?
15. How can the Church support parents in fulfilling their educational mission, especially the duty of transmitting the faith to their children?

IV. Final Thoughts

16. Are there any other thoughts or reflections that you wish to offer in light of the “Relatio Synodi”?

To respond to these questions visit www.diocesefwsb.org and complete the survey posted.
Introduction

1. The Synod of Bishops, gathered around the Holy Father, turned its thoughts to all the families of the world, each with its joys, difficulties and hopes. In a special way, the Assembly felt a duty to give thanks to the Lord for the generosity and faithfulness of many Christian families in responding to their vocation and mission, which they fulfill with joy and faith, even when living as a family requires facing obstacles, misunderstandings and suffering. The entire Church and this Synod express to these families our appreciation, gratitude and encouragement. During the prayer vigil held in St Peter’s Square on October 4, 2014, a prayer prepared for the Synod on the family, Pope Francis evoked, in a simple yet concrete way, the centrality of the family in our culture today in all its complexities, both lights and shadows; looking, our gaze is fixed on Christ to receive, in the Synod’s prayer, the light which discloses the situation, with an eye on the Lord Jesus, to discern how the Church and society can renew their commitment to the family.

PART I

Listening: the context and challenges of the family

The Socio-Cultural Context

5. Faithful to Christ’s teaching, we look to the reality of the family today in all its complexity, with both its lights and shadows. We turn our thoughts to parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters, close and distant relatives and the bonds between two families forged by marriage. Anthropological and cultural changes of our times influence all aspects of life and require an analytic and diversified approach. The positive aspects are first to be highlighted, namely, a greater freedom of expression and a better recognition of the rights of women and children, at least in some parts of the world. On the other hand, equal consideration needs to be given to the growing danger represented by a troubling individualism which deforms family bonds and ends up considering each component of the family as an isolated unit, leading, in some cases, to the idea that a person is formed according to one’s own desires, which are considered absolute. Added to this is the crisis of faith, witnessed among a great many families, which oftentimes underlies the crisis in marriage and the family.

6. One of the poorest aspects of contemporary culture is loneliness, arising from the absence of God in a person’s life and the fragility of relationships. There is also a general feeling of powerlessness in the face of socio-cultural realities, which oftentimes end in crush and despair in favoring the spirit of consumerism and enjoyment, which discourage the young from marrying. Families often feel abandoned by the disinterest and lack of attention of institutions. The negative impact on the organization of society is clear, as seen in the demographic crisis, in the difficulty of raising children, in a society which no longer welcome new life and in considering the presence of older persons as a burden. All these can affect a person’s emotional balance which can sometimes lead to violence. The State has the responsibility to pass laws and create work to ensure the future of young people and help them realize their plan of forming a family.

7. Some cultural and religious contexts pose particular challenges. In some places, polygamy is still being practiced and in places with long traditions, the custom of “marriage in stages”. In other places, “arranged marriages” is an enduring practice. In countries where Catholicism is the minority, many mixed and interreligious marriages take place, all with their inherent difficulties and the need to mention the danger of relativism or indifference. At the same time, such marriages can exhibit great potential and are a reflection of the many efforts to reach and intermediaries and both religions in a harmonious living of diverse religions in the same place. Even outside Western societies, many places are witnessing an overall increase in the practice of cohabitation before marriage or simply cohabitating with the intention of legally binding relationship.

8. Many children are born outside marriage, in great numbers in certain cases, many of whom subsequently grow up with just one of their parents or in a blended family. Divorces are increasing, many times taking place solely because of economic reasons. Oftentimes, children are a source of contention between parents and become the real victims of family break-ups. Fathers who are often absent from their families, not simply for economic reasons, need to assume more clearly their responsibility for children and the family. The dignity of women still needs to be defended and promoted. In fact, in many places today, simply being a woman is a source of discrimination and the gift of motherhood is often penalized, not to mention the serious and widespread practice of genital mutilation in some cultures. The sexual exploitation of children is still another scandalous and perverted practice that is no longer unheard of. Societies characterized by violence and techniques of organized crime are witnessing the deterioration of the family, above all in big cities, where, in their peripheral areas, the so-called “street-children” is on the rise. Furthermore, migration is another sign of the times to be faced and understood in terms of its enormous consequences for family life.

The Importance of Affectivity in Life

9. Faced with the afore-mentioned social situation, people in many parts of the world feel a need to take care of themselves, to know themselves better, to live in greater harmony with their feelings and sentiments and to seek to live their affectivity in the best manner possible. These aspirations can lead to a desire to put greater effort into building relationships of self-giving and creative reciprocity, which are empowering and supportive like those within a family. In this case, however, individualism and living only for oneself is a real danger. The challenge for the Church is to assist couples in the maturation and development of their affectivity through fostering dialogue, virtue and trust in the mer- ciful love of God. The full commitment required in marriage can be a strong antidote to the temptation of a selfish individualism.

10. Cultural tendencies in today’s world seem to set no limits on a person’s affectivity in which every...
Pastoral Challenges

11. In this regard, the Church is conscious of the need to offer a particularly meaningful word of hope, which must be based on the conviction that the human person comes from God, and that, consequently, any reconsideration of the great question on the meaning of human existence can be responsive to humanity’s most profound expectations. The great values of marriage and the Christian family correspond to the search that characterizes human existence, even in these times of individualism and hedonism. People need to be accepted in the concrete circumstances of life. We need to know how to support them in their searching and to encourage them in their hunger for God and their wish to feel fully part of the Church, also including those who have experienced failure or finding themselves in a variety of situations. The Christian message always contains in itself the reality and the dynamic of mercy and truth, which meet in Christ.

PART II

Looking at Christ: the Gospel of the Family

Looking at Jesus and the Divine Pedagogy in the History of Salvation

12. In order to “walk among contemporary challenges, the decisive condition is to maintain a fixed gaze on Jesus Christ, to pause in contemplation and in adoration of His Face. ... Indeed, every time we return to the source of the Christian experience, new paths and undreamed of possibilities open up.” (Pope Francis, Discourse, 4 October 2014). Jesus looked upon the women and the men He met with love and tenderness, accompanying their steps with patience and mercy, in proclaiming the demands of the Kingdom of God.

13. Since the order of creation is determined by its orientation towards Christ, a distinction needs to be made without separating the various levels through which God communicates to humanity the grace of the covenant. By reason of the divine pedagogy, according to which the order of creation develops through successive stages to the moment of redemption, we need to understand the newness of the sacrament of Marriage in continuity with natural marriage in its origin, that is, the manner of God’s saving action in both creation and the Christian life. In creation, because all things were made through Christ and for Him (cf. Col 1:16), Christians “gladly and reverently lay bare the seeds of the Word which lie hidden among their fellows; they ought to follow attentively the profound changes which are taking place among peoples.” (“Ad Gentes,” 11). In the Christian life, the reception of Baptism brings the believer into the Church through the domestic church, namely, the family; thus beginning “a dynamic process [which] develops, one which advances gradually with the progressive integration of the gift of God” (“Familiaris Consortio,” 9), in an ongoing conversion to a love which saves us from sin and gives us fullness of life.

14. Jesus Himself, referring to the original plan of the human couple, reaffirms the indissoluble union between a man and a woman and says to the Pharisees that “for your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.” (Mt 19:8). The indissolubility of marriage (“what therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder” Mt 19:6), is not to be understood as a “yoke” imposed on persons but as a “gift” to a husband and wife united in marriage. In this way, Jesus shows how God’s humbling act of coming to earth might always accompany the human journey and might heal and transform a hardened heart with His grace, orienting it towards its benefit, by way of the cross. The Gospels make clear that Jesus’ example is paradigmatic for the Church. In fact, Jesus was born in a family. He began to work His signs at the wedding of Cana and announced the meaning of marriage as the fullness of revelation, which restores the original divine plan. (Mt 19:3). At the same time, however, He put what He taught into practice and manifested the true meaning of mercy, clearly illustrated in His meeting with the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:1-30) and with the adulteress. (Jn 8:1-11). By looking at the sinner with love, Jesus leads the person to repentance and conversion (“Go and sin no more”), which is the basis for forgiveness.

The Family in God’s Salvific Plan

15. The words of eternal life, which Jesus gave to His disciples, included the teaching on marriage and the family. Jesus’ teaching allows us to distinguish three basic stages in God’s plan for marriage and the family. In the beginning, there is the original family, when God the Creator instituted the first marriage between Adam and Eve as the solid foundation of the family. God not only created human beings male and female (Gen 1:27), but He also blessed them so they might be fruitful and multiply. (Gen 1:28).

For this reason, “a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife and the two become one flesh.” (Gen 2:24). This union was corrupted by sin and became the historical form of marriage among the People of God, for which Moses granted the possibility of issuing a bill of divorce. (cf. Dt 24: 1ff.). This was the principal practice in the time of Jesus. With Christ’s coming and His reconciling a fallen world through His redemption, the period began by Moses ended.

16. Jesus, who reconciled all things in Himself, restored marriage and the family to their original form. (Mk 10:1-12). Marriage and
The Indissolubility of Marriage and the Joy of Sharing Life together

21. Mutual self-giving in the Sacrament of Marriage is grounded in the grace of Baptism, which establishes in all its recipients a foundational covenant with Christ in the Church. In accepting each other and with Christ’s grace, the engaged couple promises a total self-giving, faithfulness and openness to new life. The married couple recognizes these elements as constitutive in marriage, gifts offered to them by God, which they take seriously in their mutual commitment, in God’s name and in the presence of the Church. Faith facilitates the possibility of assuming the benefits of marriage as commitments that are sustainable through the help of the grace of the sacrament. God consecrates the love of husband and wife and confirms the indissoluble character of their love, offering them assistance to live their faithfulness, mutual complementarity and openness to new life. Therefore, the Church looks to married couples as the heart of the entire family, which, in turn, looks to Jesus.

22. From the same perspective, in keeping with the teaching of the Apostle who said that the whole of creation was planned in Christ and for Him (cf. Col 1:16), the Second Vatican Council wished to express appreciation for natural marriage and the valid elements present in other religions (cf. Nostra Aetate, 2) and cultures, despite their limitations and shortcomings (cf. Redemptoris Missio, 55). The presence of the seeds of the Word in these cultures (cf. Ad Gentes, 11) could even be applied, in some ways, to marriage and the family in so many societies and non-Christian peoples. Valid elements, therefore, exist in some forms outside of Christian marriage — based on a stable and true relationship of a man and a woman — which, in any case, might be oriented towards Christian marriage. With an eye to the popular wisdom of different peoples and cultures, the Church also recognizes this type of family as the basic, necessary and fruitful unit for humanity’s life together.

The Truth and Beauty of the Family and Mercy Towards Broken and Fragile Families

23. With inner joy and deep comfort, the Church looks to families who remain faithful to the teachings of the Gospel, encouraging them and thanking them for the testimony they offer. In fact, they witness, in a credible way, to the beauty of an indissoluble marriage, while always remaining faithful to each other. Within the family, “which could be called a domestic church” (“Lumen Gentium,” 11), a person begins a Church experience of communion among persons, which reflects, through grace, the Mystery of the Holy Trinity. “In a family, a person learns endurance, the joy of work, fraternal love, and generosity in forgiving others — repeatedly at times — and above all divine worship in prayer and the offering of one’s life.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1657). The Holy Family of Nazareth is a wondrous model in whose school we “understand why we have to maintain spiritual discipline, if we wish to follow the teachings of the Gospel and become Christ’s disciples.” (Blessed Pope Paul VI, Address at Nazareth, 5 January 1964). The Gospel of the Family also nourishes the seeds that are still waiting to grow; and serves as the basis for caring for those trees that might have withered and need treatment.

24. The Church, a sure teacher and caring mother, recognizes that the only marriage bond for those who are baptized is sacramental and any breach of it is against the will of God. At the same time, the Church is conscious of the weakness of many of her children who are struggling in their journey of faith. “Consequently, without detracting from the evangelical ideal, they need to accompany with mercy and patience the eventual stages of personal growth as these progressively occur. [...] A small step in the midst of great human limitations can be more pleasing to God than a life that outwardly appears in order and passes the day without confronting great difficulties. Everyone needs to appropriate the comfort and attraction of God’s saving love, which is mysteriously at work in each person, above and beyond their failings and weaknesses.” (“Evangelii Gaudium,” 44).
to enlighten those who have lost their way or who are in the midst of a storm. Conscious that the most merciful thing is to tell the truth in love, we go beyond compassion. Merciful love, as it attracts and unites, transforms and elevates. It is an invitation to conversion. We understand the Lord’s attitude in the same way: He does not condemn the adulterous woman, but asks her to sin no more. (Jn 8: 1-11).

Part III
Facing the Situation: Pastoral Perspectives

Proclaiming the Gospel of the Family Today in Various Contexts

29. Discussion at the synod has allowed for agreement on some of the more urgent pastoral needs to be addressed in the particular Churches, in communion cum Petro et sub Petro. Proclaiming the Gospel of the Family is urgently needed in the work of evangelization. The Church has to carry this out with the tenderness of a mother and the clarity of a teacher (cf. Eph 4: 15), in faithfulness to the mercy displayed in Christ’s kenosis. Truth became flesh in human weakness, not to condemn it but to save it. (cf. Gn 3: 16, 17).

30. Evangelizing is the shared responsibility of all God’s people, each according to one’s ministry and charism. Without the joyous testimony of married people and families, proclamation, even if done in its proper way, risks being misunderstood or lost in a flurry of words which is characteristic of society today (cf. “Novo Millennio Ineunte,” 50). On various occasions, the synod fathers emphasized that Catholic families, by reason of the grace of the sacrament of Marriage, are called upon to be the active agents in every pastoral activity on behalf of the family.

31. The primacy of grace needs to be highlighted and, consequently, the possibilities that the Spirit provides in the sacrament. It is a question of allowing people to experience that the Gospel of the Family is a joy which “fills hearts and lives,” because in Christ we are “set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness” (“Evangelii Gaudium,” 1). Bearing in mind the Parable of the Sower (cf. Mt 13: 3), our task is to cooperate in the sowing: the rest is God’s work; nor must we forget that, in preaching about the family, the Church is a sign of contradiction.

32. Consequently, this work calls for missionary conversion by everyone in the Church, that is, not stopping at proclaiming a message that is perceived to be merely theoretical, with no connection to people’s real problems. We must continually bear in mind that the crisis of faith has led to a crisis in marriage and the family and, consequently, the transmission of faith itself from parents to children has often been interrupted. If we confront the situation with a strong faith, the imposition of certain cultural perspectives that weaken the family is of no importance.

33. Conversion also needs to be seen in the language we use, so that it might prove to be effectively meaningful. Proclamation needs to create an experience where the Gospel of the Family responds to the deepest expectations of a person, a response to each’s dignity and complete fulfillment in reciprocity, communion and fruitfulness. This does not consist in merely presenting a set of rules but in espousing values, which respond to the needs of those who find themselves today, even in the most secularized of countries.

34. The Word of God is the source of life and spirituality for the family. All pastoral work on behalf of the family must allow people to be interiorly fashioned and formed as members of the domestic church through the Church’s prayerful reading of Sacred Scripture. The Word of God is not only good news in a person’s private life, but also a criterion of judgment and a light in discerning the various challenges which married couples and families encounter.

35. At the same time, many synod fathers insisted on a more positive approach to the richness of various religious experiences, without overlooking the inherent difficulties. In these different religious realities and in the great cultural diversity which characterizes countries, the positive possibilities should be appreciated first and then on this basis evaluate their limitations and deficiencies.

36. Christian marriage is a vocation which is undertaken with due preparation in a journey of faith with a proper process of discernment and is not to be considered only a cultural tradition or social or legal requirement. Therefore, formation is needed to accompany the person and couple in such a way that the real-life experience of the entire ecclesial community can be added to the teaching of the contents of the faith.

37. The synod fathers repeatedly called for a thorough renewal of the Church’s pastoral practice in light of the Gospel of the Family and replacing its current emphasis on the individuals. For this reason, the synod fathers repeatedly insisted on renewal in the training of priests and other pastoral workers with a greater involvement of families.

38. They equally highlighted the fact that evangelization needs to clearly denounce cultural, social, political and economic factors, such as the excessive importance given to market logic which prevents authentic family life and leads to discrimination, poverty, exclusion and violence. Consequently, dialogue and cooperation need to be developed with the social entities and encouragement given to Christian lay people who are involved in the cultural and socio-political fields.

Guiding Engaged Couples in Their Preparation for Marriage

39. The complex social reality and the changes affecting the family today require a greater effort on the part of the whole Christian community in preparing those who are about to be married. The importance of the virtues needs to be included, among these, charity, which is invaluable in the genuine growth of love between persons. In this regard, the synod fathers jointly insisted on the need to involve more extensively the entire community by favouring the witness of families themselves and including preparation for marriage in the course of Christian Initiation as well as emphasizing the connection between marriage and the other sacraments. Likewise, it was felt that specific programs were needed in preparing couples for marriage; programs that create a true experience of participation in ecclesial life and thoroughly treat the various aspects of family life.

Accompanying the Married Couple in the Initial Years of Marriage

40. The initial years of marriage are a vital and sensitive period during which couples become more aware of the challenges and meaning of married life. Consequently, pastoral accompaniment needs to go beyond the actual celebration of the Sacrament (“Familiaris Consortii,” Part III). In this regard, experienced couples are of great importance in any pastoral activity. The parish is the ideal place for these experienced couples to be of service to younger couples. Married couples need encouragement in a basic openness to the great gift of children. The importance of a family spirituality and prayer needs emphasis so couples might be encouraged to meet regularly to promote growth in their spiritual life and solidarity in the concrete demands of life. Meaningful liturgies, devotional practices and the Eucharist celebrated for entire families were mentioned as vital factors in fostering evangelization through the family.

Pastoral Care for Couples Civilly Married or Living Together

41. While continuing to proclaim and foster Christian marriage, the synod also encourages pastoral discernment of the situations of a great number of couples civilly married or living together, the synod fathers repeatedly insisted on renewal in the training of priests and other pastoral workers with a greater involvement of families. For this reason, the synod fathers repeatedly insisted on renewal in the training of priests and other pastoral workers with a greater involvement of families. They equally highlighted the fact that evangelization needs to clearly denounce cultural, social, political and economic factors, such as the excessive importance given to market logic which prevents authentic family life and leads to discrimination, poverty, exclusion and violence. Consequently, dialogue and cooperation need to be developed with the social entities and encouragement given to Christian lay people who are involved in the cultural and socio-political fields.

8. How can the Church proclaim the Gospel of the Family in a bold and more insistent manner?

9. How can the Church improve its guidance of engaged couples in their preparation for marriage and especially involve a greater commitment of the entire Christian community in this preparation?

10. How can the Church better accompany married couples in the initial years of marriage?

11. How can the Church provide pastoral care to couples who are united in a civil marriage or who live together outside marriage, guiding them on a path of growth and conversion towards the Sacrament of Matrimony?

12. How can the Church provide care for wounded families (separated; divorced and not remarried; divorced and remarried; single-parent families)?

13. How can the Church give pastoral care and attention to persons with homosexual tendencies and to their families?

14. How can the Church promote the beauty and dignity of becoming a mother or father and the openness of couples to the loving task of transmitting human life and raising children?

15. How can the Church support parents in fulfilling their educational mission, especially the duty of transmitting the faith to their children?
A family walks away after presenting the offertory gifts to Pope Francis during the canonization Mass of six Indian and Italian saints in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican Nov. 23, 2014.
Pastoral Attention towards Persons with Homosexual Tendencies

55. Some families have members who have a homosexual tendency. In this regard, the synod fathers asked themselves what pastoral attention might be appropriate for them in accordance with the Church’s teaching: “There are absolutely no grounds for considering homosexual unions to be in any way similar or even remotely analogous to God’s plan for marriage and family.” Nevertheless, men and women with a homosexual tendency ought to be received with respect and sensitivity. “Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided” (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons, 4).

56. Exerting pressure in this regard on the Pastors of the Church is totally unacceptable; this is equally so for international organizations who link their financial assistance to poorer countries with the introduction of laws which establish “marriage” between persons of the same sex.

The Transmission of Life and the Challenges of a Declining Birthrate

57. Today, the diffusion of a mentality which reduces the generation of human life to accommodate an individual’s or couple’s plans is easily observable. Sometimes, economic factors are burdensome, contributing to a sharp drop in the birthrate that weakens the social fabric, thus compromising relations between generations and rendering a future outlook uncertain. Openness to life is an intrinsic requirement of married love. In this regard, the Church supports families who accept, raise and affectionately embrace children with various disabilities.

58. Pastoral work in this area needs to start with listening to people and acknowledging the beauty and truth of an unconditional openness to life, which is needed, if human life is to be lived fully. This serves as the basis for an appropriate teaching regarding the natural methods for responsible procreation, which allow a couple to live, in a harmonious and conscious manner, the loving communication between husband and wife in all its aspects, along with their responsibility at procreating life. In this regard, we should return to the message of the Encyclical “Humanae Vitae” of Blessed Pope Paul VI, which highlighted the need to respect the dignity of the person in morally assessing methods in regulating births. The adoption of children, orphans and the abandoned and accepting them as one’s own is a specific form of the family apostolate (cf. “Apostolicam Actuositatem,” III, 11), and oftentimes called for and encouraged by the Magisterium (cf. “Familiaris Consortio,” III, II, “Evangelium Vitae,” IV, 93). The choice of adoption or foster parenting expresses a particular fruitfulness of married life, not simply in the case of sterility. The faith is a powerful sign of family love, an occasion to witness to one’s faith and to restore the dignity of a son or daughter to a person who has been deprived of this dignity.

59. Affection needs assistance, also in marriage, as a path to maturity in the ever-deepening acceptance of the other and an ever-fuller gift of self. This necessitates offering programmes of formation that nourish married life and the importance of the laity providing an accompaniment, which consists in a life of witness. Undoubtedly, the example of a faithful and deep love is of great assistance; a love shown in tenderness and respect; a love that is capable of growing over time; and a love that, in the very act of opening itself to the generation of life, creates a transcendent mystical experience.

Upbringing and the Role of the Family in Evangelization

60. One of the fundamental challenges facing families today is undoubtedly that of raising children, made all the more difficult and complex by today’s cultural reality and the great influence of the media. Consideration, then, needs to be given to the needs and expectations of families, who are able to bear witness, in their daily lives, to the family as a place of growth in the concrete and essential transmission of the virtues which give form to our existence. Parents, then, are able freely to choose the type of education for their children, according to their convictions.

61. In this regard, the Church can assume a valuable role in supporting families, starting with Christian Initiation, by being welcoming communities. More than ever, these communities today are to offer support to parents, in complex situations and everyday life, in their work of raising their children, accompanying children, adolescents and young people in their development through personalized pastoral programs, capable of introducing them to the full meaning of life and encouraging them in their choices and responsibilities, lived in the light of the Gospel. Mary, in her tenderness, mercy and maternal sensitivity can nourish the hunger of humanity and life itself. Therefore, families and the Christian people should seek her intercession. Pastoral work and Marian devotion are an appropriate starting point for proclaiming the Gospel of the Family.

Conclusion

62. These proposed reflections, the fruit of the synodal work which took place in great freedom and with a spirit of reciprocal listening, are intended to raise questions and indicate points of view which will later be developed and clarified through reflection in the local churches in the intervening year leading to the XIV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, scheduled for October, 2015, to treat The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and in the Contemporary World. These are not decisions taken nor are they easy subjects. Nevertheless, in the collaborative journey of the bishop-ops and with the involvement of all God’s people, the Holy Spirit will guide us in finding the road to truth and mercy for all. This has been the wish of Pope Francis from the beginning of our work, when he invited us to be courageous in faith and to humbly and honestly embrace the truth in charity.

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Supreme Court agrees to take up same-sex marriage cases this term

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The Supreme Court Jan. 16 agreed to hear four cases over the constitutionality of same-sex marriage, tackle the questions of whether the 14th Amendment requires states to allow such marriages and whether it requires them to recognize same-sex marriages licensed in other states. In brief orders, the court accepted petitions from Tennessee, Michigan, Kentucky and Ohio, consolidating them into one hearing that will be held probably in late April, meaning a decision would likely come before the end of the term in late June. The court allotted an unusually lengthy period of time for oral arguments, two and a half hours, compared to a typical 60-minute period. As of Jan. 16, 36 states allow same-sex marriages, either under court rulings or state laws. In the other 14 states, they are prohibited, but those bans are all under legal challenge.

Pope proclaims Sri Lanka’s first saint, right to religious freedom

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (CNS) — Canonizing Sri Lanka’s first saint, who ministered to Catholics under persecution three centuries earlier, Pope Francis proclaimed what he called the “fundamental human right” of religious freedom. “Each individual must be free, alone or in association with others, to seek the truth, and to freely express his or her religious convictions, free from intimidation and external compulsion,” the pope said Jan. 14, before a congregation of more than 500,000 in a beachfront park on the Indian Ocean. Pope Francis gave his homily half an hour after canonizing St. Joseph Vaz, a 17th- and 18th-century missionary from India who rebuilt the Catholic Church in Sri Lanka after its suppression by Dutch Protestant colonists. The pope called on Catholics today to emulate the new saint by spreading the Gospel with “missionary zeal, St. Joseph knew how to offer the truth and the beauty of the Gospel in a multireligious context, with respect, dedication, perseverance and humility,” the pope said. “We are called to go forth in this. ... Nobody is going to exclude us.” The act is meant to protect the institutional conscience as it pertains to adoption, marriage and abortion. U.S. Rep. Mike Kelly, R-Pennsylvania, discussed con-

TRIBUTE TO THE REV. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

A choir sings spiritual selections Jan. 11 during the Gary Diocese’s annual tribute to the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. at Holy Angels Cathedral in Gary. The concert choir of the Wirt/ Emerson Visual and Performing Arts High Ability Academy performed under the direction of Marion Lynn Boynes. The cathedral parish has hosted the King commemoration in each of its eight years.

Lawmakers say Congress needs to protect institutional conscience

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Speakers at a policy summit in Washington Jan. 13 addressed the issue of protecting institutional conscience as it pertains to adoption, marriage and abortion. U.S. Rep. Mike Kelly, R-Pennsylvania, discussed conscience protections for religious and other adoption agencies, which is the aim of the Child Welfare Provider Inclusion Act, known as H.R. 5825.

Franciscan leader in Black Catholic ministry named auxiliary bishop

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Pope Francis has named Franciscan Father Fernand “Feen” Cheri III, a New Orleans native who currently is director of campus ministry at Quincy University in Illinois as an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. The appointment was announced Jan. 12 in Washington by Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, apostolic nuncio to the United States. Bishop-designate Cheri, who turns 63 Jan. 28, has a background that includes extensive roles in Black Catholic liturgy, music and spirituality, in adding to having served on the Franciscans’ provincial council and as their director of friar life. He also is a board member of the National Black Catholic Congress and has been involved in activities including the NBCC gatherings, the U.S. bishops’ subcommittee on Black Catholic worship and the National Joint Conference of Black Religious Planning Committee. He originally was ordained as a priest for the Archdiocese of New Orleans May 20, 1978. He studied at Notre Dame University and at the Institute for Black Catholic Ministry at Xavier University, both in New Orleans.

Dominican sister chosen to lead Catholic Charities USA

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (CNS) — Dominican Sister Donna Markham has been chosen to succeed Father Larry Snyder as the new president of Catholic Charities USA. The announcement was made Jan. 12 at Catholic Charities headquarters in Alexandria, a suburb of Washington. Sister Donna becomes the first woman to lead Catholic Charities, which was founded in 1910. She will officially take over from Father Snyder June 1. In a Jan. 12 telephone interview with Catholic News Service, Sister Donna said it is “a wonderful story” that three of the United States’ leading Catholic service organizations are headed by women, listing Carolyn Woo, president of Catholic Relief Services, and Sister Carol Keehan, a Daughter of Charity who is president and CEO of the Catholic Health Association. “I see myself as number three — at least,” Sister Donna said. “It’s the first time for Catholic Charities, but certainly not the first time in this country.” Currently president of the Behavioral Health Institute for Mercy Health based in Cincinnati, Sister Donna, a board-certified clinical psychologist, has a doctorate in clinical psychology from the University of Detroit and was named a fellow in the American Association of Clinical Psychologists. Last year, she was awarded the prestigious Harold S. Snyder Training Award from the American Group Psychotherapy Association in February 2014.

U.S. Dominicans discover service, deep faith in Iraqi counterparts

BEIRUT (CNS) — Three U.S. Dominican sisters visiting displaced Christians in Iraqi Kurdistan encountered a witness of service and deep faith. They had traveled to Iraq on a mission of solidarity with the Iraqi Dominicans, who are among 10,000 Christians who fled their homes last summer by the advances of Islamic State militants. Now the displaced sisters are hosting most of the internally displaced Iraqis. They recalled “very, very sad faces”; small, metal housing units almost as cold for us, and we come from real "winter." People are hosting most of the internally displaced Iraqis. They recalled “very, very sad faces”; small, metal housing units almost as cold for us, and we come from real "winter." People are hosting most of the internally displaced Iraqis. They recalled “very, very sad faces”; small, metal housing units almost as cold for us, and we come from real "winter." People are hosting most of the internally displaced Iraqis. They recalled “very, very sad faces”; small, metal housing units almost as cold for us, and we come from real "winter." People are hosting most of the internally displaced Iraqis. They recalled “very, very sad faces”; small, metal housing units almost as cold for us, and we come from real "winter." People are hosting most of the internally displaced Iraqis. They recalled “very, very sad faces”; small, metal housing units almost as cold for us, and we come from real "winter." People are hosting most of the internally displaced Iraqis. They recalled “very, very sad faces”; small, metal housing units almost as cold for us, and we come from real "winter." People are hosting most of the internally displaced Iraqis. They recalled “very, very sad faces”; small, metal housing units almost as cold for us, and we come from real "winter." People are hosting most of the internally displaced Iraqis. They recalled “very, very sad faces”; small, metal housing units almost as cold for us, and we come from real "winter." People are hosting most of the internally displaced Iraqis. They recalled “very, very sad faces”; small, metal housing units almost as cold for us, and we come from real "winter." People are hosting most of the internally displaced Iraqis. They recalled “very, very sad faces”; small, metal housing units almost as cold for us, and we come from real "winter." People are hosting most of the internally displaced Iraqis. They recalled “very, very sad faces”; small, metal housing units almost as cold for us, and we come from real "winter." People are hosting most of the internally displaced Iraqis. They recalled “very, very sad faces”; small, metal housing units almost as cold for us, and we come from real "winter." People are hosting most of the internally displaced Iraqis. They recalled “very, very sad faces”; small, metal housing units almost as cold for us, and we come from real "winter." People are hosting most of the internally displaced Iraqis. They recalled “very, very sad faces”; small, metal housing units almost as cold for us, and we come from real "winter." People are hosting most of the internally displaced Iraqis. They recalled “very, very sad faces”; small, metal housing units almost as cold for us, and we come from real "winter." People are hosting most of the internally displaced Iraqis. They recalled “very, very sad faces”; small, metal housing units almost as cold for us, and we come from real "winter." People are hosting most of the internally displaced Iraqis. They recalled “very, very sad faces”; small, metal housing units almost as cold for us, and we come from real "winter." People are hosting most of the internally displaced Iraqis. They recalled “very, very sad faces”; small, metal housing units almost as cold for us, and we come from real "winter." People are hosting most of the internally displaced Iraqis. They recalled “very, very sad faces”; small, metal housing units almost as cold for us, and we come from real "winter." People are hosting most of the internally displaced Iraqis. They recalled “very, very sad faces”; small, metal housing units almost as cold for us, and we come from real "winter." People are hosting most of the internally displaced Iraqis. They recalled “very, very sad faces”; small, metal housing units almost as cold for us, and we come from real "winter." People are hosting most of the internally displaced Iraqis. They recalled “very, very sad faces”; small, metal housing units almost as
**FORT WAYNE PRO-LIFE RALLY, MARCH DRAWS SUPPORT**

More than a thousand pro-life supporters, led by the Knights of Columbus, pass by the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in downtown Fort Wayne as they participated in the 41st annual March For Life on Jan. 17. The march began at the University of Saint Francis Performing Arts Center and followed a rally with keynote speaker Mike Spencer, the Midwest director of training for Life Training Institute. Dr. Donna Harrison, executive director of the American Association of Pro-Life OB-GYNs (AAPLOG), was also a speaker. Representatives from “Silent No More,” the awareness campaign for men and women with an abortion in their past, spoke outside the Federal Building at the end of the march.

**SOUTH BEND — Tom Keller, principal and co-founder of Keller McIntyre and Associates, a leading Washington lobbying firm that represents nonprofits, charities and faith-based organizations, is a South Bend native who works as a lobbyist in Washington, DC, and recently had a rare private audience with Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI in the Holy Father’s living room and was told by the former pontiff, “ Charity without truth is meaningless; truth without charity is also meaningless. The two cannot be separated.” Tom Keller is the son of Thomas and Gladys Keller of South Bend, attended Holy Family Grade School and Saint Joseph High School, and became interested in public service as a youth during visits to the St. Joseph County Surveyor’s office in downtown South Bend.

**Author of ‘The New Jim Crow’ to speak at Saint Mary’s College**

NOTRE DAME — Saint Mary’s College will host Michelle Alexander, author of the best-selling book “‘The New Jim Crow,” on Monday, Feb. 9, at 7 p.m. in O’Laughlin Auditorium. The lecture is free and open to the public. Due to anticipated high demand, this is a ticketed event. Tickets may be reserved by calling the Moreau Box Office at 574-284-4626 or going to moreaucen-ter.com.

The Saint Mary’s Center for Women’s Intercultural Leadership, the Division for Student Affairs, the Office of Spiritual and Religious Life, and the Office of Special Events are sponsors of the event.

**Pope Benedict XVI tells South Bend native, charity and faith must be linked**

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Parish ‘gem’ begins celebration of 100 years of Catholic education in Besancon

BY MICHELLE CASTLEMAN

NEW HAVEN — The year 2015 marks a very special time for the students and staff at St. Louis Academy in rural New Haven. It was 100 years ago, on Thanksgiving Day, 1915, at 9:30 a.m. that the dedication of their new school was held after a blazing fire destroyed the former wooden structure called St. Joseph School on the French settlement at Besancon.

Historical accounts of the event detail a “grand time” with Bishop Herman Joseph Alerding, countless clergy and hundreds of visitors from near and far attending as they traveled via the interurban. After a solemn high Mass at the church, the faithful, along with the school children, marched to the school which was “gaily decorated with a dozen American flags” for a blessing of the interior and exterior of the new building.

Classes in the new school, which opened under the name St. Louis Academy, began on Oct. 4, with three teachers from the Sisters of Notre Dame (who had taught at the old school Sept. 3, 1910), and 116 students.

The fabulous new brick building boasted four large schoolrooms, a basement and auditorium — “well arranged and solidly constructed.”

During the early years, students thrived in the Catholic setting of their family-like atmosphere. Various reports found in the archives itemized improvements made.

In 1936, new concrete floors were laid in the basement of the school and in 1937 the interior of the school was painted, the floors reconditioned and stokers were installed. New storm windows were placed in the school in 1946 when the School Sisters of Notre Dame who had taught at the old school Sept. 3, 1910, and 116 students.

In her January newsletter to alumni, Klinker summarized: “St. Louis Academy has stood the test of time. Our physical building may have been updated and our educational practices modernized, but it is the community pride in St. Louis Academy that sustains the Catholic mission it was destined for.”

During the two decades pastor at St. Louis Besancon Parish Father Stephen E. Colchin has lovingly referred to St. Louis Academy as the parish gem.

He spoke recently of his gratitude to the parish and its families: “For 100 years, this parish and its families have supported St. Louis Academy with their time, talent and treasure and made personal sacrifice to send their children to a Catholic school. We have much to be thankful for as the Lord has guided us over this past century, and we pray this same guidance will sustain us well into the future.”

During the 2015 Catholic Schools Week, students and staff will kick off the festivities collecting 100 canned goods throughout the week as well as dressing like and re-enacting a day in 1915.

Klinker detailed the mission statement for the celebration, “The Centennial Celebration will be a time in which St. Louis Academy will honor its extraordinary past, celebrate the success of our present and imagine our future, as St. Louis Academy continues to weave a foundation of faith and academics in all students.”

Still in the planning stages, many events have been proposed for the students and community throughout the year including an alumni united and greet, performing 100 good deeds before the 100th day of school and doing 100 service hours.

The celebration will culminate on Nov. 1, 2015, All Saints Day, with Mass celebrated by Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades.
Everyone’s favorite librarian

BY VINCE LABABERBA

FORT WAYNE — Children’s literature offers a generally positive portrayal of librarians as knowledgeable, helpful, amazing and friendly. In fact, that’s the image Mary Beltz has been portraying as the librarian at Queen of Angels School, Fort Wayne, for the past 35 years. And as she turns 80 on Jan. 30 — appropriately, during Catholic Schools Week — she has no plans to turn in her library card.

Born in Fort Wayne, Mary attended Cathedral School and graduated from Central Catholic High School. Even though she, her parents, one brother and three sisters lived off of West Main Street near Lindenwood Cemetery, the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception downtown served as their parish. Her parents were married there, it was where Mary was baptized and later married, and where her only son, Andrew, was baptized and subsequently married.

Mary’s father was a police officer. And like most back then, her mother was a stay-at-home mom. She did drive a carload of neighborhood children to and from Cathedral School.

After their marriage in 1954, Mary and her husband, William, moved to California for two years where he was stationed with the Navy. Returning to Fort Wayne, they again located west of the downtown area and attended the cathedral.

When Cathedral School was closed in 1980, Mary was able to enroll her son at Queen of Angels School.

When asked how she became a librarian, Mary said, “We waited a long time (20 years) to have a child and then God gave us this miracle.”

“He’s a great kid!” she exclaimed. “I thought I should help the school because I love it so much that he got in. Volunteers were needed and I signed up for everything since my husband had a good job and I didn’t have to work.”

Initially, she was playground supervisor nearly every day, saying, “It was fun!” But soon she moved to the library and worked with librarian Susanne Tobin. “She was the best and taught me everything I know,” Mary said.

“I worked for her two days a week,” she continued, “but the more I was there the more I worked and the more I came in the more she taught me,” said Mary.

When it was time for retirement, Tobin asked Mary to take over. And Mary knew enough by then to be able to handle the job for the past 35 years.

And what do you need to know to be a librarian, Today’s Catholic asked? “You have to know all about the Dewey Decimal system,” she stressed. “That’s how all the stacks are lined up. God has given me the knowledge to know where nearly all the books are,” she said.

When asked if there were any stories that stood out over the years, she quipped, “I could write a book!” An example, she related, occurred recently at a Saturday night Mass. A preschooler came up behind her and admitted he forgot to bring his book back. He then turned to his mother and pointed to Mary, saying, “That’s the library!”

Mary often ran into another preschooler around town, she said. “At Walgreens, he finally asked me, ‘Why do I keep seeing you at different places?’ ‘I don’t know,’ I answered. Then he said, ‘I think God just wants us to see each other!’ I love these kids,” Mary added.

You won’t hear “Shhhhh” in Mary’s library. That’s because she’s there to help the children and not just monitor their behavior. “They’re good kids and very respectful. I’ve never had a problem. In 35 years I’ve only given out two detentions.”

In addition to maintaining the library for each class and fulfilling individual book requests, Mary conducts reading programs for third and fourth graders, works with junior-high students, helps judge spelling bees and assists with dismissal. In the past, she belonged to HASA, did school lunches, worked in the office, served as a kindergarten aide and assisted kids who needed individual help.

“I do whatever is needed. I assisted kids who needed individual expertise. ‘It’s fun to come to work and help everybody out with anything. We just love her,’” Catholic Schools Office Superintendent Marsha Jordan said, “Mary Beltz has been a true treasure to the Queen of Angels School community. In fact, she might be described as Queen of Angels own ‘national treasure.’ True to her Irish roots, Mary loves to laugh, loves people and loves life. As principal at Queen of Angels from 2000-2010, I saw firsthand how Mary used the position of librarian to positively connect with all students, making each feel like they were the most important and loved student in the building. Students in turn found a caring person in whom they could entrust their private joys and worries, and someone to laugh with.”

“Mary probably tells you that it is she who has been blessed to work at Queen of Angels these past many years, but actually it is those of us who have experienced her joy for life who have truly been blessed,” Jordan said.

For 15 years Mary volunteered her services but now is paid for her expertise. “It’s fun to come to work every day, I really, really love it!” she emphasized. “And what’s really cool is the kids come back and see me, give me a hug. There are kids who left here, got married and now have kids who attend here, I just love it. It’s a good place to be.”
Marsha Jordan is the superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.
Communities rally for academic success for past struggling schools

BY LISA KOCHANOWSKI

SOUTH BEND, ELKHART — The African proverb, it takes a village to raise a child, is very true when people talk about the amazing academic success of St. Vincent de Paul School in Elkhart and St. Adalbert School in South Bend. Both grade schools found themselves in academic trouble with the Indiana Department of Education’s A-F grading scale in 2012 and 2013. To correct the problem, community wide programs were launched within each of the schools that led to an “A” grade in 2014.

“To the academic success I definitely credit the dedication, innovation and hard work of our teaching staff, who have taken it upon themselves to make sure that an academically excellent education is provided. That’s been our No. 1 priority since the state found us to be a failing school three years ago,” said St. Adalbert Principal Andrew Currier of the success. “That’s been a top priority alongside ensuring there is a very solid faith education being provided to the children.”

“First and foremost, I would attribute it to the fact that God is good and trusting in Him is paramount,” noted St. Vincent de Paul Principal Tom Gropp. “Secondly, we accomplished what we did because of the dedication and hard work of staff, students and parents.”

Each school put instructional changes in place to ensure that students were learning and growing academically. Teachers have participated in professional development and personalized training to reach out to students and families.

“We worked very diligently to take a look at our core subject criteria,” said Currier. “We had to make sure that adequate time was given to core subjects to make sure that we prioritized math and language arts. We found that we weren’t taking enough time with those subjects especially with children who are acquiring English as a new language.”

“Our math was really struggling, too, so we put in a number of supports instructionally,” he said. “In fact we hired another teacher to support math, and we hired a person that helps support math throughout the school and also tracks academic data for the whole school.”

In 2012, St. Vincent began working with Doepker Educational Consulting. Through this relationship they learned about data driven instruction, changing the way the school assessed students. This model aided the school in understanding and meeting the needs of the students. It has been an ongoing process for the past three years. Each year specific goals are made and met to help the school stay on track for continuous improvement.

Gropp noted it has been a learning process for each school, time has been noted as one of the greatest obstacles to achieving success.

“The biggest obstacles are finding enough time to get as far as we really need to academically,” Currier said. “Timing is crucial.”

“We’ve put into place an extensive after-school program that a majority of the school participates in, and we also have a lot of help from Notre Dame tutors that come in and work with the students after school as well,” said Currier. The program runs four days a week for an hour and 20 minutes.

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Bishop Rhoades encourages Saint Joseph High School students to ponder the Gospel daily, walk in Christian friendship together

BY CHRISTOPHER LUSHIS

SOUTH BEND — “Think deeply about the Gospel!” Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades emphasized to those in attendance at Mass during his annual pastoral visit to Saint Joseph High School on Jan. 16, celebrated by Father Terry Coonan, the school chaplain and parochial vicar at St. Pius X, Granger, and Holy Cross Father Brian Ching, parochial vicar of St. Joseph Parish.

Bishop Rhoades continued, “Too often our faith can be superficial if we don’t think deeply about it. When we do, the Gospel affects our lives; we are challenged, we become transformed.”

Reflecting upon the Biblical narrative of the paralytic who was lowered through the roof by his friends so that Jesus might heal him, Bishop Rhoades commented on the great faith of those men and the importance of building Christian relationships.

“We read in the Gospel that Jesus saw and was impressed by their faith,” Bishop Rhoades said. “They loved their friend and wanted him to be healed, and they trusted that Jesus had the power to cure him. This is what true friends do; they help those in need, they desire the good of others, and they bring them to Jesus. Then to their surprise, not only was his physical ailment healed, but the greater issue — his spiritual paralysis — was eliminated too.”

“We can all find ourselves spiritually paralyzed,” Bishop Rhoades said. “This is what sin does to us. It prevents us from walking toward God. But the power of His merciful love can set us free. Jesus is our Savior, the divine physician who heals us so that we are once again able to walk along the path of goodness and holiness. Let us help one another to walk along that path!”

At the end of Mass, as is customary during Bishop Rhoades’ pastoral visits, he fielded questions from students on various topics, ranging from his favorite saints and most memorable experiences — which include having met St. John Paul II and Blessed Mother Teresa — to his memorable experiences which shines through his homilies, his desire to provide guidance as he shepherds His Church — to which Bishop Rhoades promised his continued prayers and support.

After Mass, Bishop Rhoades toured the school and visited senior theology classes learning Catholic social teaching and Church history. He impressed upon the students the need for confronting injustices, especially those that most heavily impact children, and on being instruments of God’s mercy in the world. He also emphasized the benefits of learning other languages, which can open and provide new worlds of possibility, especially for building the global Church, and he touched on the importance of finding a strong Catholic community to become connected to as college students.

Bishop Rhoades ate lunch with the members of the student council, who shared together in a meatless Friday meal — a weekly practice in the dining hall for reminding students of the importance of fasting to greater glorify God. During this meal, student leaders Maggie Verhley, Keenan White, Meghan Magee, Mary Schmitt, Jeanie Freby, Grace Horan and Charlie McFadden discussed with the bishop their overall experiences at Saint Joseph’s and their personal plans for the future. Bishop Rhoades shared with them his desire to provide a strong theological foundation through the atmosphere and courses offered by the Catholic schools throughout the diocese and was pleased to hear about how their faith has grown and matured at Saint Joseph’s.

Bishop Rhoades was interviewed by broadcasting intern students Alex Daughtery and Summer Horan before concluding his day with a discussion between theology teachers and campus ministers on goals and plans for the future. Students, faculty and staff each expressed their gratitude toward Bishop Rhoades for his willingness to make the visit a priority and for providing a witness to the community of how the Church requires and is benefited from personal connection to their pastoral shepherd.

Father Coonan remarked, “I think it’s always a great visit when the bishop comes to Saint Joe. He interacts with the students in a way that shows his true pastoral heart, which shines through his homilies, for sure, but comes out even more clearly when he engages the students for question and answer after Mass and in the classrooms. I’m happy that while there are many important things to be done, he is so generous with his time toward the students...
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BY KAY COZAD

FORT WAYNE — St. Joseph School opened its 2014-15 school year as a stand-alone central city school after being part of a joint school with St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School for the past 16 years. In its 90-year history, St. Joseph has continued to be an academic beacon for the surrounding community.

Currently, as a stand-alone school, St. Joseph educates over 100 preschool through fifth-grade multi-ethnic students in its newly renovated building at 2211 Brooklyn Ave. in Fort Wayne. As the newest Catholic school in the diocese, the currently enrolled fifth-grade students will become the first graduating class of St. Joseph School in 2018.

Its exemplary academic curriculum includes religion studies for its rich ethnic student body, the majority of whom are of Hispanic descent and the dedicated staff of 13 includes a substantially staffed resource room for those students who require additional assistance in both academics and language development.

Cristy Jordan, St. Joseph School principal, says that two-thirds of the students enrolled this year are new to the Catholic school experience. Many of the kindergarten and first-grade students are challenged with English language development needs and the dedicated teachers are working daily to build an academic and social English vocabulary for their students, who speak Spanish. “It’s really amazing to watch their language flourish,” notes Jordan.

Sacramental preparation is an integral part of life at St. Joseph for the second-grade students, many of whom have not received religious instruction before. And another element of St. Joseph School’s successful first semester is the focus on teaching third through fifth graders the key skills to pass the standardized tests the state requires. The challenge says Jordan, is identifying whether the need of any student is a result of not yet being familiar with the skill or a language-based issue. In this effort, and working alongside Fort Wayne Community Schools for best practices, St. Joseph employs progress monitoring, which tracks the student’s progress in not only academics but in language development as well.

“This is an opportunity for us to seek out strengths and know the areas of growth to make the students good Catholic citizens,” says Jordan, who adds that though the first semester enrollment had the school at slightly less than capacity, resources were put in place to meet the needs of the incoming student population.

“We built the school in a way to prepare for the needs that were coming,” she says.

The goal of the school is to put best practices in place to meet the unique needs of its students. St. Joseph’s robust resource program remains a mainstay even with the smaller enrollment in an attempt to meet the dual challenge of academic and language development needs. “But we don’t have the enrollment to fund the needs,” says Jordan, who admits enrollment next year will be crucial to build up funding. But, she says, “We must focus on meeting the needs of the kids now.”

Prospects for the future are encouraging for this Christ-centered school program that includes the first accredited preschool in the diocese. Along with the intent to grow the preschool program Jordan is hopeful that with a partnership with a local university, St. Joseph will host a summer program that will offer academics and athletics, which will provide an opportunity for prospective students to experience Catholic education. Jordan has secured St. Joseph as a free food site and will host free student breakfasts and lunches during the summer as well. Jordan is grateful for St. Joseph pastor Father Tim Wrozek, who is “open and has his eyes set on the community good,” and for the foundations that have supported the new school’s vision, including Our Sunday Visitor, St. Joseph Community Health Foundation and Christ Child Society. “We’re teaching the kids about charity and stewardship,” says Jordan, who is witness to the “cycle of sharing” that is growing at St. Joseph and in the surrounding area.

St. Joseph is not just an exemplary elementary school but also serves as the site for an exciting new initiative for adults called the Adult Learning Center, where adults can attend classes for themselves. Day and evening classes led by volunteers, include basic home maintenance, citizenship, computer skills in both English and Spanish, English as a second language and much more. The goal of the center, says Jordan, who is the visionary and grant writer for the program, is to “provide life-long opportunities for anyone… It’s cultivating relationships across the whole parish and breaking the ice off the local community.”

The future looks bright for the newest elementary school in the diocese with the strong foundation of Christ-center work. Principal Jordan says she continually asks, “Are we fulfilling the mission of the Church and setting an example for the kids?”

For more information on St. Joseph School call 260-432-4000 or visit www.saintjosephtfw.com.

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Two become one: the family fully alive

Dioecesan registration for accommodations for the Theological Congress preceding the World Meeting for Families is now open. Also, please read and consider Bishop Rhoades’ invitation to respond to his questionnaire in preparation for the Synod on the Family this October. The registration and questionnaire are both available on the dioceesan website at www.dioceesan.org.

Catechesis: Part 4

In a postmodern world where trust is scarce, marriage seems daunting. We worry that we may be tied to someone else’s choices. By the time you read this, questions about financial or economic security, must be answered and put to rest before we can love as Jesus did. In response to the range of possible worries and fears, the Church offers Jesus, the sacraments and the support of her own members in mutual fellowship, confident that for all its challenges the Christian way of living is possible, and will reveal our true selves. The Church promises her sons and daughters that Marriage is a sacrament, that the bond and practice of Marriage makes sustaining grace real, present and efficacious.

In response to our fears and anxieties, the Church insists that to promise love in the manner of the covenant is not a hypothetical for mythical saints who are perfect, but a real and possible commitment for actual sinners who are on the way. As Pope Francis puts it: “The Sacrament of Marriage... takes place in the simplicity of the faithful and the fragility of the human condition. We know the many trials and difficulties that the lives of a married couple encounter... The important thing is to keep alive the link with God, which is the basis of the marital bond.”

To love in this way is not something we will try once we have put to rest certain practical questions; rather, life’s practical questions are answers. Jesus is human. He is humanity’s handmaid, sustainer and hope. Christ’s human hand, granted to us through his sacrifice and resurrection, makes the divine hand that reaches out to us felt and real. In this way, we will try once we have put to rest certain practical questions; rather, life’s practical questions are answers. Jesus is human. He is humanity’s handmaid, sustainer and hope. Christ’s human hand, granted to us through his sacrifice and resurrection, makes the divine hand that reaches out to us felt and real. In this way, we will try once we have put to rest certain practical questions; rather, life’s practical questions are answers. Jesus is human. He is humanity’s handmaid, sustainer and hope. Christ’s human hand, granted to us through his sacrifice and resurrection, makes the divine hand that reaches out to us felt and real.

In this comparison, Paul obviously urges the Corinthians to be holy. The Gospel of Mark provides the last reading. It is the story of the Lord’s calling of Andrew, Simon Peter, James and John to be apostles. All the early Christians found stories of the Twelve especially important. The Apostles were key in the understanding of the Gospel of Jesus. Going far and wide, the Apostles were the links with Jesus. Imposters, maybe well-meaning, also came and went among the early Christians. Knowing who was an authentic Apostle was imperative, in order to accept, or not, what was attributed to Jesus. The genuine Apostles possessed the credentials of having been called and empowered by Christ. Thus, the Gospels carefully report their names and calls.

The Apostles were simple men. Yet, Jesus called them, and they responded in the affirmative. We simply must choose to heed the message: “The Apostles were simple men. Yet, Jesus called them, and they responded in the affirmative. We simply must choose to heed the message: “

LOVE IS OUR MISSION

FRED AND LISA EVERETT

You and me

Two became one: the family fully alive

I came from a good-sized Catholic family with mom and dad, five siblings and lots of pets over the years. Even as a child I marveled at God’s gift of so many personalities and temperaments. And the many group dance we all did as we worked to get along. My older sister and younger brother are gregarious and fun loving. My other two sisters are reserved and wait patiently on life’s sidelines for their turn. My second brother is analytic and works to figure life out with numbers and rows. And me, well, I tend to feel life very deeply and wear my emotions on my sleeve. As I’ve grown older (and hopefully wiser) I’ve worked to get along with siblings and most folks fit one of four temperaments and I’ve found that to be true in grief as well. I remember well those who rallied the others in her support group for evening out and talk fests, unfraid of the pain of grief. She would be a gregarious temperament.

Others were patient and slow and shared only when they felt a profound need to release their pain — shy. Still others worked hard to understand the details of grief and develop a survival plan — analytical. And then there were those who expressed their emotions outwardly, telling their stories with tears and lamenting — sensitive.

I’ve long spoken of the importance of understanding that each grief journey is as unique as our fingerprint. Each temperament will drive its own way through the pits and stopholes of grief. And if we discover and understand who we are in grief, we will be better prepared to face what beholds us along the way with our own unique style.

I recall that day long ago when I learned that my dear husband had been killed in an accident. Though his death occurred in early morning, due to an unfortunate error I was not notified. Three hours after the fact, his brother and I learned of his death as we drove to the funeral home. Due to an unfortunate error I was not notified. Three hours after the fact, his brother and I learned of his death as we drove to the funeral home.

If we are analytic like my father in law, in our need to order things we must surrender at times to the nature of grief and work that we all tap into rather than hold the event or grieve in our own way. If we are analytic like my father in law, in our need to order things we must surrender at times to the nature of grief and work that we all tap into rather than hold the event or grieve in our own way.

Rejoicing with the people of Nineveh and in Corinth, but no one is too proud to lose their beloved. The city was for its people a refuge from Nineveh and from Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire, located roughly in the region of modern Syria. He arrived at its time, the first century A.D., what was Nineveh for the Jewish people? For those who witnessed the conversion of Nineveh to Judaism, Nineveh was the capital of Assyria, the heart of this godless empire.

Thus, the Gospels carefully report the story of this movement of the people of the city. The Jews who first heard this message were not impressed. As a result, the Jews regarded the One God of Israel.

The Jews who first heard this message were not impressed. As a result, the Jews regarded the One God of Israel.
Esteeming our elders and fostering solidarity across generations

Occasionally we hear disturbing stories in the media about young people who perpetrate abuse against the elderly. In a widely reported 2009 story, for example, caretakers at the Quadrangle Assisted Living facility outside Philadelphia were charged in connection with the abuse of an elderly patient named Lois McCallister. Three caregivers, aged 19, 21, and 22, were caught on a surveillance camera as they taunted, mocked and assaulted the partially naked 78-year-old woman.

She had begun complaining to visiting family members several months prior that someone was hurting her and hitting her. There were also initial signs of bruising on her hand and wrist. After bringing the bruises to the attention of the nursing home’s administrators, the family was informed that the allegations were unfounded, and were told the account was simply the result of the patient’s advancing dementia. Family members suspected there was more to it, and clandestinely installed the video camera in a clock in the victim’s room.

After capturing the assaults on tape, they concluded that the abuse suffered by their mother had been ongoing for some time. One of the young women charged in the case told investigators she was working on another floor the night the clock/camera captured the scene in the elderly woman’s room. A family member later told news reporters, “They called the third girl down from another floor and said, ‘Come down, we’re going to start.’

As a consequence of the abuse, the Department of Public Welfare eventually revoked the license for the facility, and the family filed a civil lawsuit against the parent company.

A tragic event like this leads to intense questioning about how these young people, charged with the special care of the older generation, could end up becoming so callous, inhuman and brutal. What can be done to prevent this kind of “inter-generational disconnect” from occurring in the future? And what can be done to build up unity and respect between generations?

A nearly universal point of reference over the years, and a counsel of inestimable worth, has been the injunction contained in the Decalogue: Honor your father and mother. A decision to abide by this commandment invariably serves to strengthen the concern of children for their parents and elders, and helps forge a bond between the generations.

The Book of Sirach offers similarly sage advice: “My son, take care of your father when he is old; grieve him not as long as he lives. Even if his mind fail, be considerate of him; revile him not all the days of his life; kindness to a father will not be forgotten, firmly planted against the debt of your sins.”

In a sense, it is precisely the weakness and vulnerability of the elderly that beckons us to manifest a greater respect towards them, and never to mistreat them in the strength of youth. As Pope John Paul II beautifully summed it up in his 1999 Letter to the Elderly: “… the signs of human frailty which are clearly connected with advanced age become a summons to the mutual dependence and indispensable solidarity which link the different generations…”

Compassionately attending to the needs of the elderly draws the generations together and builds solidarity.

When the unique gifts of the elderly are invested and shared with the younger generation, this, too, builds up solidarity. Elderly people help us see human affairs with a sense of perspective tempered by experience, reflection and wisdom. Whenever grandparent contributions to the raising and formation of the grandchildren, even by doing something as simple as teaching them how to pray and think about God, they strengthen inter-generational ties and build family unity.

We can foster intergenerational care and support within our families and communities in other simple ways as well, for example, through conscientious parenting, including small but important steps such as insisting on meal time together as a family (which builds up mutual respect and concern for others in the family); teaching compassion by visiting sick or elderly neighbors together; teaching children to welcome all human life, even when weak or handicapped; praying together as a family; decreasing media time and guarding against violent computer/video games, pornography and other practices that dehumanize people and make them seem like objects to be manipulated.

As we seek to build relational bridges across generations, and work to construct a society that esteems its elders, we simultaneously build up homes and communities that are liberated of the threat of abuse or neglect — places of safety, mutual support and love, even as the hairs on our head turn gray and our strength wanes.

FAMILY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

that we choose to do in everyday life, beginning here and now amidst daily pressures. … Pope Francis acknowledges that many people might be afraid of such a challenge; that people might avoid marriage out of skepticism or fear:

“Today many people are afraid of making definitive decisions, that affect them for all their lives, because it seems impossible. … And this mentality leads many who are preparing for marriage to say, ‘We will start living together as long as our love lasts.’ But what do we mean by ‘love?’ A mere emotion, a psycho-physical state? Certainly, if it is just this, it cannot provide the foundation for building something solid. But if instead love is a relationship, then it is a growing reality, and we can also say, by way of example, that it is built in the same way that we build a house. And we build a house together, not alone!”

People who want to build their marriage on rock will cultivate certain virtues. The Catechism of the Catholic Church promises that in the Sacrament of Marriage, Christ provides a couple with a couple with the help of spouses to pick up their cross, “to rise again after they have fallen,” to forgive and bear with each other’s imperfections. Pope Francis makes a related point succinctly when he says living together is an “art … which can be summarized in a few simple words: please, thank you and sorry.” Learning to say these things can be hard. But marriages can turn very painful, very fast, when these simple words are missing.

All of the cardinal and theological virtues are necessary and relevant for marriage to flourish. Charity in particular is the seed from which strong marriages grow. To train our hearts for marriage, we need practice in interior freedom, the practice of seeing our sexuality in the context of communion and the holiness of each other’s personhood. Charity forms the good habits of self-denial and self-control, which are prerequisites for treating others with mercy. Marriage fantasies, absent a chaste heart, make a poor start for a long walk of marriage.

Christian marriage is a matter of mutual self-surrender. And of course there are alternatives, other models of marriage on offer in society at large. But to the degree that “marriage” is a contract, a division of rights between individuals protecting their own autonomy, then we are sowing the seeds of disappointment and conflict. Eros will wax and wane, and a framework of contesting rights is not fertile ground for mercy.

Over the centuries, human beings have married for countless reasons, some of them purely pragmatic. In the sacramental Marriage, the Church offers us shelter, grace and a daily lesson in the nature of God’s love. The Church’s marital vows constantly recall a husband and wife to their better natures, and situate a marriage in relation to the other sacraments as well, especially Penance and Eucharist. This sacramental economy puts reconciliation and fidelity at the foundation of married life, and, in so doing, fosters and protects true communion between the sexes. People in postmodern times, uncertain what and who can be trusted, such a venture seems risky. But the Church, a mother who knows the human heart better than we know ourselves, also knows who Jesus is, that He is the Lord, that He is trustworthy — and that His way of loving is, in the end, the only way.

FATHER TAD PACHOLCZYK

Making sense of Bioethics

MARK TIME BELIEVE FISHERMEN FOLLOWED ZEBEDEE CALLED GALILEE KINGDOM OF GOD SIMON COME FARTHER BOAT FATHER PROCLAIMING REPENT ANDREW NETS JAMES MENDING HIRED MEN

Sant of the week: Angela Merici 1470-1540

By age 26, Angela had lost most of her wealthy Italian family to death. As a Franciscan tertiary, she performed good works and taught catechism to girls in her home in Desenzano del Garda. Two visions inspired her to found a congregation dedicated to the religious training of young women; she began this mission with a school in Brescia. Earlier she had endured an episode of blindness while on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and had rejected a papal request to run all charities in Rome. In 1535, she founded the Ursulines and served as superior until her death. This mystic, a patron of catechists, reportedly was fascinated from childhood by the legend of St. Ursula, an early virgin-martyr.

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SCRIPTURE SEARCH

Gospel for January 25, 2015

Mark 1:14-20

Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle B. Peter, Andrew, James and John join Jesus. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

BROTHERS FISHING


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scripture search
**BISHOP LUERS, BISHOP DWENGER TEAM UP TO HOST SPECIAL OLYMPICS GAME**

Bishop Luers and Bishop Dwenger High School hosted DeKalb County's Special Olympics basketball team, the DeKalb Swish, on Friday, Jan. 9, during the varsity basketball games held at Bishop Luers High School. The DeKalb Swish played against a team comprised of Bishop Dwenger Saints and Bishop Luers Knights boys’ JV players. The DeKalb Swish began competing last year and won their first sectional title. Student councils from both schools worked together to provide a warm welcome and a great court for competition.

**BISHOP DWENGER FRESHMAN BASKETBALL TEAM WINS HOLIDAY TOURNAMENT**

The Bishop Dwenger High School 2014-2015 freshman boys' basketball team won the Ninth-Grade SAC Holiday Tournament championship held Dec. 29-30. The team became the second freshman boys’ team in school history to reach the championship game and win the title. The team defeated Wayne, 38-25, South Side, 39-24, and Concordia in the championship game, 18-15. Team members are managers Colton Buescher, Jordan Hudson and Franco Rodriguez and players Jalen Royal, Dane Houlihan, David McComb, Alec Watercutter, John Veracco, Chip Clark, Tommy Steele, John Henry Reith, Bradley Black, Grant Richardson, Eddie Morris, David Maxson and Lucas Lehrman. Nathan Conroy and Jacob Torkeo coach the team.

**K105 HOOPSTERS TO TAKE ON THE ST. ROSE-ST. LOUIS TWINS ALUMNI** Mark your calendars to attend the K105 Hoopsters vs. St. Rose-St. Louis Twins alumni at the St. Rose gym, Monroeville, on Thursday night, Jan. 29, at 7 p.m. Admission is $4 for adults and $2 for students. Bring a canned food item for $1 off. Concession stand will be open with a chance to win $105 and raffle items available. All proceeds will benefit Twins Athletics. — Michelle Castleman

**CYO hoop action gathers steam in January**

**BY MICHELLE CASTLEMAN**

**FORT WAYNE — Renee Meussling and Jodi Kahlenbeck, the tournament coordinators for the 19-team Holiday Tournament at Most Precious Blood School, reported highlights from the 2014 event, which has run for over 20 years the weekend between Christmas and New Year’s Day.** This year, the boys’ top finishers were all sixth-grade squads. The winner was St. Vincent (green) with St. Charles coming in second and St. Vincent (white) third.

For the girls’ teams, St. Charles 6 won it all with St. Vincent 6 coming in runner-up and St. Vincent 5 placing third.

A new tradition was started this year — the Christian Attitude Award. Teams winning the first annual traveling trophy were St. John the Baptist, New Haven, (boys) and Most Precious Blood (girls). Voting was done solely by the officials and was based on coaches and players display of Christian attitude and overall sportsmanship. Parishioner Derk Hinesey of Bad Dad Motorcycles presented the trophy.

Kelly Mouch, athletic director at St. John the Baptist, New Haven, said, “These are the moments that really matter and not the wins and losses. It was truly an honor to receive this award. It speaks volumes about the character the young gentlemen and their coaches possess. They truly are walking and practicing their faith.”

In other action, Christine Nix’s St. Jude seventh-grade girls’ squad played St. Elizabeth 7 on Saturday, Jan. 10. With a low scoring first half, the Eagles led, 7-4, at the break. But the second half both teams picked up the scoring and the pace. St. Jude went on to win, 28-19.

In a classic Blue League battle to kick off the New Year, Most Precious Blood beat St. Therese, 31-27, on Saturday, Jan. 10, at St. Joseph-Hessen Cassel. The score was 16-16 at the half. But Most Precious Blood’s stingy defense held St. Therese scoreless in the third quarter. However, the Crusaders were not ready to give up. With two minutes left in regulation, the game was all tied up, 24-24. However, the Reds hung on to win 31-27. Connor Christian led all scorers with 13, while John Peterson had 12 for St. Therese.

On Sunday, Jan. 18, Queen of Angels topped St. Rose-St. Louis, 32-28, in a tough battle that came down to the wire. High scorer for the Twins was August Hein with 14, while Jacob McEvoy led all with 23 for Queen of Angels. The Twins also had a non-conference match up on Saturday, Jan. 17, on their home court where the eighth-grade players were honored before the match up. In that loss, Evan Whitman had 14 points.
ICCL Game of the Week:
Holy Family, Queen of Peace place firmly on contest

BY JOE KOZINSKI

SOUTH BEND — A battle of runs was the stamp that the Trojans of Holy Family and their eastside opponents, the Pumas of Queen of Peace, would place firmly on contest as they both vied for victory in an Inter-City Catholic League classic match up at Saint Joseph High School.

The teams, both trying to stay afloat during the early season, seemed to be hitting their stride at the opportune moment.

The Pumas jumped to an early lead behind a long range jumper by Alex Kasnia, followed by two charity stripe buckets by Joe Tordi in what looked like a potential run away. Trojan Ryan Hessy squashed the rumble of blowout by connecting on a huge three pointer to put Holy Family on the board and into the thick of the contest.

The teams settled in and as exchanging buckets the score was tied, 10-10, after the first quarter.

A Holy Family’s Riley Hessy hit a three-ball giving them the first lead of the game and with the aid of his brother, pushed the lead to a double-digit deficit over the Pumas.

Queen of Peace added a couple of baskets late in the quarter to make the margin respectable six and the second half anyone’s game.

The Pumas must have listened to their seasoned coach at halftime as they came out and quickly knotted the score on a myriad of points from Eddie McCrity, Tordi and Matt Obringer.

Queen of Peace wasn’t finished as Ryan Piraccini knocked down a mid-range shot ending the quarter with the Pumas clinging to a one-point lead.

The start of the final quarter was the one-man run of runs as dormant Puma big man Luni Sete scored inside not once, not twice, but three times in a one minute and 45 seconds span, and he also added a pair of free throws to make it a 10-point lead for the blue-and-white-clad squad.

Holy Family’s Luke Fozo finally stopped the bleeding by hitting a free throw and then the first field goal of the second half at the 2:34 mark.

The Trojan’s last push was a little too late as the Pumas claimed victory in the topsy-turvy contest, 44-34.

The undefeated Eagles of Corpus Christi, behind an 11-point effort of John Driscoll, expelled the Eagles of St. Adalbert, 42-12.

Despite double-digit scoring by Charlie Maxwell and Thomas Ewing for St. Thomas, Zach Whitfield’s 21 propelled the Saints of Mishawaka Catholic to a narrow 48-40 triumph.

The undefeated Eagles of St. Joseph remained that way thanks to Brennan Horvath’s baker’s dozen as they beat Corpus Christi and Austin Lee, 40-26.

Coley Quinn led the Blazers of St. Matthew to yet another victory by posting a 31-18 score on the St. Jude Falcons.

Christ the King’s Sam Clark again came up big as his squad more than doubled the output of Holy Family, 59-21.

Panthers George Griffin and Ryan Schmitt chipped in 18 and 14 points respectively as St. Anthony outpaced the bulldogs of Our Lady of Hungary, 38-15.

The Lions of St. Pius X stayed unbeaten in the St. Martin DePorres division by conquering Queen of Peace, 40-29. The threesome of Alex Mossey, Jonathon Branch and Luni Sete all scored more than 10 in the highly contested game.

A complete schedule and list of division standings of the Inter-City Catholic League can be found at www.icclsports.org.
**What’s Happening?**

**Plays on St. Maximilian Kolbe announced**
Fort Wayne — Two shows are scheduled in the Diocese both at University of Saint Francis Robert Goldstine Performing Arts Center on Berry St. at 7 p.m. and a evening show at 7 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 28. The tickets are $5 for upper level, $10 for lower level and $15 per family for upper level.

**St. Hedwig Rosary and Holy Name Societies plan Polish style dinner buffet**
South Bend — St. Hedwig will host a Polish style dinner Sunday, Feb. 8 from noon to 2 p.m. in the Hedwig Memorial Center on the corner of Scott and Western. Tickets are $11 per person by advance sale only. Carry the parish office at 574-287-8932 by Feb. 4. Carry outs available. Cash Bar offered.

**Knights plan fish fry**
Fort Wayne — The Knights of Columbus Council 451, 601 Reed Rd. will have a fish fry on Friday, Feb. 6, from 5 to 7 p.m. Tickets are $8 for adults and $4 for children 12 and under.

**Spaghetti dinner supports Boy Scouts**
Fort Wayne — Boy Scout Troop 20 will have a spaghetti dinner Saturday, Feb. 7, from 5-7 p.m. in the Queen of Angels Activity Center, 1300 W. State Blvd. Adults $8, seniors $6, students $6 and families $28. Venice meat sauce. Casa salad and Edy’s ice cream.

**Spaghetti supper planned**
Mishawaka — The Knights of Columbus Council 1878 will have a spaghetti supper Friday, Feb. 13, from 5-7 p.m. at 114 West First St. Tickets are $8 for adults, $5 for children age 5 and above. Children under 5 years of age are free. All proceeds benefit Hannah’s House.

**Card and socializing party planned**
Fort Wayne — Men and women 21 years of age and older are invited to a card and socializing party Saturday, Jan. 24, from 7 p.m. to midnight at Queen of Angels activity center. Cost is $10 at the door, which includes pulled pork and chicken, cole slaw, snacks, beer, pop and water. Door prizes awarded. All proceeds benefit Queen of Angels athletics. Contact Denny Jamison at 260-418-1139 for information.

**Bishop Luers Winter Homecomng**
Fort Wayne — Bishop Luers High School will have a winter homecoming Friday, Feb. 6, for the varsity boys’ and girls’ basketball games beginning at 6 p.m. The alumni office will be recognizing the 1968 and the 2014 boys’ SAC championship tennis teams during halftime of the boys’ game. A Casa Knight Dinner will be from 4:30-7 p.m. in the cafe and reservations are suggested. For information contact Sarah Shank at sshank@bishopluers.org or 260-456-1261, ext. 3039.

**Day of Reflection**
Mishawaka — A day of reflection will be held at St. Francis Convent (across from Marian High School) Wednesday, Feb. 4, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The theme for the day is “Peace and Non-Violence.” Bring a Bible. The cost of the day is $20 and includes lunch. Register by Jan. 30 to Sister Barbara Anne Hallman at 574-259-5427.

**Evenings of reflection planned**
Notre Dame — “Be Still — The Contemplative in the Active World” is the theme for two evenings of reflection on Jan. 26 and 29 at 6 p.m. at the Sacred Heart Parish Center on the Notre Dame campus. This year’s series “Stillness in All Seasons” will explore the place of contemplative prayer during the different stages of life. Tickets are $8. For more information and reservation, contact Patricia Bellm at 574-631-1379 or proclaim@nd.edu or visit icl.nd.edu/proclaim.

**Theology on Campus**
Mishawaka — High School teens are invited to Theology on Campus Monday, Jan. 26, from 7-8:45 p.m. at the Knights Hall, 114 W. First St. Presenter Justin Seng will speak on “Who is reveling our story.” Cappuccino, hot chocolate or soft drinks are free. Guests are welcome to bring snacks.

**Bishop Luers High School to host Trivia Night**
Fort Wayne — Bishop Luers High School will host a Trivia Knight on Friday, Feb. 20, in the gymnasmium from 7-11 p.m. with doors opening at 6 p.m. Complimentary soft drinks and water will be provided. Beer and wine will be available to purchase. Round sponsorships are available for $50 per round. Table cost is $125; maximum of 10 adults per table. Theme for the night is “support your favorite team.” Reservations to 260-356-1588 or trvianight13@gmail.com.

**Spaghetti Festival supports Bishop Luers**
Fort Wayne — The Knights of Columbus Council 11043 will have an “all-you-can-eat” breakfast on Sunday, Jan. 25, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the gymnasium at Most Precious Blood, 1515 Barthold St., and at the Activities Center at Queen of Angels, 1500 W. State Blvd. Tickets are $8 for adults, $4 for children 6-12 and $20 per family. Carryout meals (with drink) will also be available for $5. All proceeds will benefit the William Roth Memorial Scholarship Fund.

**Holy Name Society fish fry**
New Haven — The Holy Name Society of St. John the Baptist Parish will have a fish fry Friday, Jan. 23, from 4-7 p.m. Adults $8, children 5-12 $4, children under 5 free.

**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@diocesefwsb.org. Events that require an admission charge or payment to participate will receive one free listing. For additional listings of that event, please call our advertising sales staff at (260) 456-2824 to purchase space.
work is required each summer and the candidates must meet with their spiritual director monthly. They are also assigned a deacon or priest as a mentor who guides them throughout the program.

During the homily in Spanish, Bishop Rhoades reflected on the day’s Gospel of the call of Levi, a sinner and tax collector, to be an apostle. Bishop Rhoades emphasized that no one is worthy of the call of Holy Orders, neither he nor priests nor the future deacons.

Jesus said, “People who are healthy do not need a doctor; sick people do. I have come to call sinners, not the self-righteous.” The bishop stressed that this is a wonderful proverb that we must always remember. “We are all in need of the Divine Physician, the Lord Jesus.”

Reflecting on the first reading from the letter to the Hebrews, which describes God’s word as “living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword,” the bishop reminded the candidates that they were preparing to be ministers of that word. He encouraged them to study the Scriptures and tradition well since they will be teachers and educators of the faith.

Several candidates in this class have young families, including Giovani Muñoz of St. John the Evangelist in Goshen said, “It’s very meaningful. I reflected back to 40 years ago when I was an altar boy and used to serve at the Spanish Masses in Miami. It’s amazing how God leads you step by step.”

Candidate’s reactions

After the homily, Deacon Stan Lemieux, the director of Diaconal Formation, presented each candidate by name to Bishop Rhoades. The bishop asked the candidates two questions:

“In response to the Lord’s call, do you resolve to complete your preparation so that in due time through Holy Orders you will be prepared to assume ministry within the Church?”

“Do you resolve to prepare yourselves in mind and spirit to give faithful service to Christ the Lord and His Body, the Church?”

To which they responded, “I am.” The bishop then said, “The Church receives your declaration with joy. May God who has begun the good work in you bring it to fulfillment.” The bishop blessed the candidates, praying for their perseverance in their vocation.

Candidates’ reactions

After the Mass some of the candidates and their wives shared what the day and the diaconate meant to them.

Christian Nieves of St. John the Evangelist in Goshen said, “It’s very special to me because I have the opportunity to be a deacon. I like serving people and feel special (calling) inside of me.”

Fred Everett of Corpus Christi, South Bend, whose mother is Cuban, said the day was “much more meaningful. I reflected back to 40 years ago when I was an altar boy and used to serve at the Spanish Masses in Miami. It’s amazing how God leads you step by step.”

His wife, Lisa, said, “I really feel this is a partnership — we are in this together. He will be the only one ordained but we are called as a couple to this and I found my heart fuller than expected.”

The Everetts said it was also special to be a part of the first class of candidates. Fred said once the decision was made to have a Hispanic diaconate, there were obstacles in finding people who could teach in Spanish, but he said the bishop and the committee persevered.

Our Lady of Guadalupe candidate Marco Castillo said, “I feel blessed that God called me.” His daughter, Flor, who helped translate, said her father added he felt very privileged and wants to study hard to be a good deacon and be in prayer and serve the community.

Flor said, “I feel blessed as well. This has had a huge impact on our family.”

Several candidates in this class have young families, including Giovani Muñoz of St. John the Evangelist.

He said, “This is a day of joy for our family. I feel really blessed and grateful. Our Church needs people willing to serve the Lord and not just at church but wherever the need is.”

Muñoz said he identifies with Pope Francis, who shows us to act out our faith. He also expressed appreciation for Bishop Rhoades and said “he is a blessing for our diocese,” who has been very supportive of the group of candidates and wants to know them on a personal level.

The couple was asked if they received any advice from deacons with young children, and Virginia Muñoz said a couple from Texas came to speak to the group and when they entered the diaconate they had six children under 12.

“It was good for me to hear their experience,” she said. “This is a challenge — but a good one. God put us on this path and we work as a family and we’re becoming stronger as a family as we support him in all his studies.”

Muñoz said wives are so important to the diaconate process. “I wouldn’t be able to do it by myself or without the support of my wife.”

Director of Diaconal Formation Deacon Stan LeMieux said, “It’s a great day for the Church. It’s a great day for these men who’ve worked their backsides off. I feel personally responsible for them and I pray for them a lot. We’re getting into the real hard part now. I’m glad the wives have been able to come to most of the classes.”

Deacon LeMieux expressed gratitude to the formation team, including Holy Cross Father Jack Keefe, director of spiritual formation; Deacon Dave Elchert, coordinator of pastoral field education; Professor Timothy Matovina and Lourdes Silva, coordinators of education; and Enid Roman de Jesus, language and cultural advisor. “We couldn’t do this without the formation team,” said Deacon LeMieux.