Bishop opens Jubilee Year of Mercy

BY TIM JOHNSON

FORT WAYNE — Celebrating Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades opened the Jubilee Year of Mercy, a year that will stretch through Nov. 20, 2016.

Pope Francis proclaimed a special year “inviting us to contemplate the mystery of divine mercy,” Bishop Rhoades said in his homily at the Dec. 7 Mass. To open the year, preceding the official opening, the diocese presented a play, “Faustina, Messenger of Divine Mercy,” that spoke of St. Faustina and the Divine Mercy message at three locations across the diocese.

In his homily, Bishop Rhoades quoted Pope Francis and asked the faithful to keep the pope’s words in mind throughout the jubilee year: “Jesus Christ is the face of the Father’s mercy. These words might well sum up the mystery of the Christian faith. Mercy has become living and visible in Jesus of Nazareth, reaching its culmination in Him.”

Bishop Rhoades said, “Jesus is the face of the Father’s mercy. Mercy has become living and visible in Him! If we wish to see God, to know God, we must look to the Son, to Jesus, who reveals to us the face of the Father, the Father who is rich in mercy.”

‘Go deeper’ encourages St. Vincent de Paul Society president

BY IRENE COPENHAVER

SOUTH BEND — St. Vincent De Paul Society national president Sheila Gilbert spoke at the annual meeting of the St. Joseph County St. Vincent de Paul Society and urged members to “go deeper” spiritually and personally at the event held at St. Anthony de Padua on Dec. 1.

“God is calling, in this Year of Mercy, the society to grow in holiness by deepening our relationship with the people we serve,” Gilbert said. “No work of charity is foreign to the St. Vincent de Paul Society.”

She added, “The Holy Spirit is calling the society to deepen itself spiritually.”

“I believe that God is calling us to engage more personally with the people that we serve: to walk with them as they are journeying in poverty and as they are walking out of poverty. We are called to walk that walk with them,” Gilbert said.

The St. Vincent Society offers food, clothing, furniture, and financial assistance to families in need. They also offer tutoring and summer camp for children.

Gilbert expressed the desire for the society to go from being a “Band-Aid” organization — one that provides immediate help and then moves on — to being an organization that walks with a family until that family is stable.

“We are being called to bring Christ’s love to a family, not just once, but as long as that family needs us,” she stated.

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Justice and mercy

IN TRUTH AND
CHARITY

BISHOP KEVIN C. RHoades

In the Gospel this coming Sunday, the Church presents to us the great Advent figure of Saint John the Baptist, the Precursor of the Lord. His message of conversion and repentance prepared the people for the coming of Jesus the Messiah. John’s preaching is a call to us still today, a powerful call to prepare our hearts for the Lord who comes.

In the Gospel this Sunday, the crowds seem to have been moved to repentance by John the Baptist’s preaching. They responded by asking him the question: What should we do? They wanted to know what they should do to demonstrate their repentance and to be prepared to welcome the Messiah. Three times the same question was asked, by the crowds in general, by the tax collectors, and by the soldiers: What should we do?

In answering the tax collectors, John said to them: Stop collecting more than what is prescribed. In answering the soldiers, John said to them: Do not practice extortion; do not falsely accuse anyone, and be satisfied with your wages. Basically, John is telling them to act with justice.

The tax collectors would often collect more than was due in taxes and then keep the difference for themselves. John is telling them to cease doing so and to behave honestly. He is telling them to be just. Similarly, John tells the soldiers to act with justice. Soldiers would often extort money by force and by making false charges. They would use strong arm tactics or blackmail to supplement their income. John is telling them to stop.

Both the tax collectors and the soldiers were instructed by John to show the sincerity of their repentance by being honest and acting justly. This is also an important admonition for us. We are called to act with justice in our lives.

What is justice? According to the classic definition, it “consists in the constant and firm will to give their due to God and neighbor” (CCC 1807). The tax collectors and soldiers had been unjust in cheating and infringing upon the rights of other people. They had not given them what was due. They were unjust to their neighbors. Repentant, they asked John the Baptist what they were to do. John told them they needed to change their lives, to turn away from their corruption and act with justice toward their neighbors.

We hear a lot about justice these days. It is an important moral virtue for us to practice as individuals. The Catholic Church has a rich tradition of teachings on social justice founded on respect for the human person and the rights that flow from human dignity and guarantee it. “Society ensures social justice by providing the conditions that allow associations and individuals to obtain their due” (CCC 1945). Social justice is linked to the common good. Justice alone, however, is not sufficient.

Saint John Paul II wrote: “By itself, justice is not enough. Indeed, it can even betray itself, unless it is open to that deeper power which is love.” One can say that justice alone is not sufficient for the coming of Jesus the Messiah. John’s preaching is a call to us still today, a powerful call to prepare our hearts for the Lord who comes.

In the Gospel of this Sunday, there is a group that asks John the Baptist, what should we do? This group is simply identified as “the crowds.” I think John’s answer gets to the deeper call, the call to mercy and love. He says: Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise. One could argue that this is actually “being just” to the poor, but it is something more than just giving the person his/her due. It is showing mercy to the other. It is an act of solidarity with one’s neighbor. In the social doctrine of the Church, solidarity is placed alongside the value of justice. It is the way of love. Love presupposes and transcends justice, which “must find its fulfillment in charity” (Saint John Paul II).

We are celebrating the Jubilee Year of Mercy, not the Jubilee Year of justice. By saying this, I don’t mean to devalue the importance of justice or set justice in opposition to mercy. As Pope Francis says: “God goes beyond justice with His mercy and forgiveness. Yet this does not mean that justice should be devalued or rendered superfluous... God does not deny justice. He rather envelops it and surpasses it with an even greater event in which we experience love as the foundation of true justice.”

That event is the death and resurrection of Jesus.

As we approach Christmas in these last weeks of Advent, let us continue to contemplate the mystery of mercy supremely revealed in the Son of God who “for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven.” And let’s not forget to do a work of mercy as a Christmas gift for someone in need, for Jesus Himself “in the distressing disguise of the poor” (Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta).

Holy Doors to open for the Jubilee Year of Mercy

FORT WAYNE — The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend announced that, in accordance with Pope Francis, three symbolic Holy Doors will be opened on Sunday, Dec. 13, the Third Sunday of Advent. The opening of the doors will mark the beginning of the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy.

• Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades will celebrate Mass at 5 p.m. at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne.

• Msgr. Michael Heintz, rector, will celebrate Mass at 11 a.m. at St. Matthew Cathedral in South Bend.

• Holy Cross Father Peter Rocco, basilica rector, will celebrate Mass at the Sacred Heart Basilica at Notre Dame during the 10 a.m. Mass. All are welcome to attend.
Mass, breakfast with Fort Wayne St. Vincent de Paul Society held

BY VINCE LABARBERA

FORT WAYNE — “Like Jesus in today’s Gospel, St. Vincent de Paul, Blessed Frederick Ozanam, and members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society have been moved with pity, filled with compassion, at the sight of ‘the troubled and abandoned,’” said Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades in his homily at a Mass with the Fort Wayne District St. Vincent de Paul (SVP) Society.

The annual Mass and breakfast near the feast of the Immaculate Conception was held Dec. 5 at St. Mary, Mother of God Catholic Church. Father Tim Wrozek, pastor of St. Joseph Church and spiritual director of the SVP Society, Fort Wayne, concelebrated the Mass.

“Jesus went about healing the sick and bringing hope to those whom the Gospel says ‘were like sheep without a shepherd,’” Bishop Rhoades continued. “Our Lord not only personally reached out to the poor and the suffering. He also sent the Twelve Apostles to do the same. He sent them to announce the kingdom, not only with words, but with their actions. He told them: ‘Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons.’ The Church has also received this mandate from Jesus, a mandate that you as Vincentians seek to obey as you serve the poor, the suffering, the marginalized and the forgotten.”

Bishop Rhoades mentioned the words of the Gospel that Jesus’ heart was “moved with pity” for the crowd. “This is an important detail for our reflection,” the bishop said. “Some biblical translations say that His heart was ‘moved with compassion.’ The Greek word in the original text is ‘splanchnizomai.’ It comes from ‘splanchna,’ which means the inward parts of the body, the heart, lungs, liver and kidneys. In other words, Jesus was moved deep within at the sight of the troubled and abandoned, the poor and the suffering. He wasn’t just moved with a little pity, but deep in His soul. He had pity and compassion with mercy and love for them. … We, who are disciples of Jesus, need to cultivate this compassion of Jesus in our hearts,” Bishop Rhoades said. “This was the compassion felt by St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac, by Blessed Frederic Ozanam and Blessed Rosalie Rendu, and by all the Vincentian saints. Moved with this compassion, they acted, they went out to help the poor, to serve the people who were suffering. You know the great works of mercy of these saints,” he said.

In his homily Bishop Rhoades emphasized, “We are on the threshold of the Jubilee Year of Mercy. This is a special time for reflect on this incredible mercy of Jesus and the Father, and then, moved by the Holy Spirit, go forth to be merciful. The pope says: ‘Day after day, touched by God’s compassion, we also can become compassionate toward others.’ Pope Francis is particularly asking us to reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, to rediscover them. He says that this will be a way to reawaken our conscience, too often grown dull in the face of poverty. And let us enter more deeply into the heart of the Gospel where the poor have a special experience of God’s mercy.”

“I invite and encourage you as Vincentians to enter deeply into the Jubilee Year of Mercy,” Bishop Rhoades said.

Current and retired Care Van drivers stand next to the new SVPD Society vehicle. Each volunteer takes a one-week turn every two to three months driving needy patients to and from medical appointments. They are, from left, Paul Braun, Ed Jarboe, Darrel Dodane, Mike Mowan, Dave Loeffler, Randy Lauer and Mel Vachon. Not available were Dana Asher, Bill Ellison, John Nowlan and Richard Beecher. Two charter Care Van drivers, who reportedly helped start the program more than 25 years ago, died in 2015. They are Terry (Coach) Goohan and Marlo Gump.
Hesburgh Lecture Series focuses on ‘Fighting for those in Need’

BY VINCE LABARBERA

FORT WAYNE — The Notre Dame Club of Fort Wayne and Catholic Charities, Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, in conjunction with the Alumni Association of the University of Notre Dame, hosted a lecture followed by a panel discussion focusing on current research and programs aimed at helping those in need.

The event, which was free and open to the public, was held Dec. 2 at the Allen County Main Library downtown. It offered an opportunity to learn about lead-

Panelists included William N. Evans, Ph.D., Keough-Hesburgh professor of economics at the University of Notre Dame; Gloria Whitcraft, chief executive officer for Catholic Charities; and Nyein Chan, refugee services director at Catholic Charities.

Professor Evans initially spoke about the three-year-old Wilson Sheehan Lab for economic opportunities at Notre Dame. Known as the Lab for Economic Opportunities (LEO) — named after Pope Leo XIII who wrote the initial encyclical on Catholic social teaching — current research initiatives include women’s and children’s nutrition, homelessness prevention, job readiness, youth engagement and poverty alleviation.

Catholic Charities in Fort Wayne has programs for pregnancy services, poverty relief, food support, refugee resettlement, immigration and aging.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Evans said there are two ways social service organizations deal with poverty: charities provide for the needs, just as they have for the past 100 years, treating the symptoms of poverty. Or, by reorienting focus, spend more money to move people out of poverty instead of just dealing with the current situation they are in.

“You have to know what works and what doesn’t work,” he emphasized, “and take evaluation more seriously, collecting the necessary data.”

Professor Evans said LEO’s initial goal was to generate academic quality research-driven poverty solutions. “The phrase we like to use is that we innovate, evaluate, disseminate and replicate. At the local level there are a lot of good ideas on how to move people out of poverty,” he continued. “To figure out which ones are worth investing in and which are not you have to evaluate. Once you evaluate and close down ineffective programs you have to invest in those that are working. And the way you do that is disseminate information… After that we want the successful programs to be replicated.”

Before moving into the panel discussion, Dr. Evans gave examples of several successful programs across the county with which LEO is working.

Questions from moderator Jacob D. Benedict, director of research for AMI Investment Management, Kendallville, and the audience began with how donors should go about evaluating where to put their money.

“Do the homeless shelters learn how to be an American citizen and integration into society. Responding to the question, ‘Do the homeless shelters try to educate their clients so that they can stop the cycle of homelessness,’” Whitcraft cited several local agencies with which Catholic Charities exchanges referrals and works collaboratively in an effort to serve the poor and vulnerable holistically.

Benedict concluded the question-answer by asking how each panel member would use $50,000 if an investor gave that amount of money to each of them.

“We certainly would spend some of those funds on evaluation,” said Whitcraft, “because we want to be good stewards of our dollars. And I would like to see our agency do more preventative work,” she added.

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- BINGO: Kingston Nursing Home (monthly)
- St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store
- Jail Ministry: Taking Christ to inmates (visitaton and teaching)
- Christmas Help for Families
- Vehicle Donation Program

24 PARISHES IN THE FORT WAYNE AREA HAVE A SAINT VINCENT de PAUL CONFERENCE!
YOM
Continued from Page 1
Bishop Rhoades said it was appropriate for the jubilee year to begin on the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, “because Mary is the Mother of Jesus, the Mother of Mercy.”

“In fact, she is the masterpiece of God’s mercy in the world. No other creature manifests God’s mercy as does Mary Immaculate,” the bishop said.

Bishop Rhoades spoke how God put enmity, complete and radical opposition, between the devil and a woman. “He presented a woman from any stain of sin! That woman is Mary. Her offspring is Jesus. In His mercy, God did not allow her to inherit the condition of original sin. If she would have inherited this condition, and participated in the disorder and corruption that the rest of us inherit from Adam and Eve, then she would have been at least partially under the sway of Satan and evil.”

God poured out His grace upon Mary from the first moment of her existence. This is the Immaculate Conception.

“That is why at the Annunciation, the angel Gabriel addressed Mary as ‘full of grace,’” the bishop said. “She is the only human person ever addressed this way in the whole Bible. She received a special gift from God not due to any merit on her part, but on the basis of the merits of her Son. God the Father applied the graces of His Son’s passion and death, which He foreknew, to Mary at the moment of her conception in her mother’s womb.”

“The Father, rich in mercy, sent His Son to be our Redeemer, to save us. And He saved Mary. Yes, Mary, as a daughter of Adam and Eve, needed to be saved and to be saved by the grace of Jesus Christ. In His mercy, God saved her in a unique way, applying that grace to her at the moment of her conception,” he said.

Bishop Rhoades spoke how Catholics are to live the Year of Mercy.

“Based on the reflections of Pope Francis, I recommend to you and all the people of our diocese who are able three things: the contemplation of divine mercy, the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, and the spiritual and corporal works of mercy,” he said.

He suggested Holy Scripture, particularly meditation on the psalms of mercy in the Old Testament and the parables of mercy in the New Testament, which are posted with this story.

The bishop said he was praying that many people will return to the sacrament of Reconciliation “and allow themselves to be touched by the tender love and mercy of God.”

A third piece is the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. “I invite everyone, myself included, to heed Pope Francis’ call to rediscover the works of mercy. There are 10 of them,” Bishop Rhoades said.

Some works of mercy may be a struggle.

“You could say,” Bishop Rhoades noted, “how in the world can I visit the imprisoned, one of the corporal works of mercy? Well, if you do it literally, you could do it in a different way, like donating a book to be given to a prisoner through the diocesan prison ministry or maybe praying a rosary for someone in prison.”

Other corporal works one can do more directly, he said, like clothing the naked: for example, giving a warm winter coat to a poor person you meet or to the St. Vincent de Paul Society to give to the poor.

Sometimes the spiritual works of mercy can also be challenging, like forgiving offenses.

Continued from Page 3

Bishop Rhoades continued. “Concretely, I suggest that you read the Holy Father’s beautiful papal bull for the Year of Mercy. It is entitled ‘The Face of Mercy.’ I also invite you to study anew the corporal and spiritual works of mercy and spread knowledge of them in your parishes and apostolates. This Jubilee Year is an opportunity to enter more deeply into your Vincentian mission and its spirituality. I recommend reading the lives of the great Vincentian saints, saints of mercy. This year is also an opportunity to share your charism with others, to invite others, especially young adults, to join the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Many of our people will be entering into this Jubilee Year and reflecting on our Holy Father’s call to be merciful and compassionate. I hope that many will look to the St. Vincent de Paul Society as a way to serve in the Church and to live the Gospel of mercy.”

In conclusion, he said, “I wish to thank you for your witness to the Gospel of mercy in our diocese. May this Jubilee Year of Mercy be a time of grace and spiritual renewal for you and for the whole Church! May Mary, Our Mother of Mercy, intercede for you!”

At the breakfast for the Vincentians comprising 22 parish conferences in seven counties, Cheryl Mowan, district president, recognized current and retired Care Van drivers. Bishop Rhoades and Mowan also presented the 2015 SVDP Society Top Hat awards to six individuals.

“Nineteenth-century gentle- men, like Blessed Frederic Ozanam and his friends — who formed the society — all wore top hats,” said Mowan. “A typical sign of courtesy and respect for another was a ‘tip of the hat.’ So, the awards for outstanding Vincentians show a tipped hat,” she explained.

SVDP-FW

Holy Year is a reminder to put mercy before judgment, pope says

BY JUNNO AROCHO ESTEVES

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — On a cloudy, damp morning, Pope Francis’ voice echoed in the atrium of St. Peter’s Basilica: “Open the gates of mercy!”

The rite of the opening of the Holy Door was preceded by a Mass with 70,000 pilgrims packed in St. Peter’s Square Dec. 8, the feast of the Immaculate Conception and the beginning of the extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy.

As the sun broke through the clouds, heralding the start of the jubilee year, the pope bowed his head and remained still for several minutes in silent prayer.

Amid a crowd of dignitaries and pilgrims, a familiar face was also present at the historic event: retired Pope Benedict XVI, who followed Pope Francis through the Holy Door into St. Peter’s Basilica.

During his homily, Pope Francis emphasized the “simple, yet highly symbolic” act of opening the Holy Door, which “highlights the primacy of grace,” the same grace that made Mary “worthy of becoming the mother of Christ.”

“The fullness of grace can transform the human heart and enable it to do something so great as to change the course of human history,” he said.

The feast of the Immaculate Conception, he continued, serves as a reminder of the grandeur of God’s love in allowing Mary to “avert the original sin present in every man and woman who comes into this world.”

The Year of Mercy, the pope stressed, is a gift of grace that allows Christians to experience the joy of encountering the transforming power of grace and rediscovering God’s infinite mercy toward sinners.

“We have to put mercy before judgment, and in any event God’s judgment will always be in the light of His mercy. In passing through the Holy Door, then, may we feel that we ourselves are part of this mystery of love.”

Shortly after the Mass, as thousands of people waited in St. Peter’s Square for a chance to walk through the Holy Door, Pope Francis led the midday Angelus prayer.

Scripture passages for meditation during the Jubilee Year of Mercy

Ten Psalms of Mercy:
25, 41, 42, 43, 51, 57, 92, 103, 119 and 136.

Eight Parables of Mercy:
Lk 7:36-50; Lk 10:25-37; Lk 15:1-10; Lk 15:11-32; Lk 16:19-31; Lk 18:1-8; Lk 18:9-14.
Advent Lessons and Carols at The Center at Donaldson

DONALDSON — Advent is the season of expectant waiting where Christians prepare for the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus Christ at Christmas. Join them for nine biblical lessons of Advent and traditional Christmas Carols.

Director of Liturgy and Music Andrew Jennings will conduct traditional Christmas carols that will be sung by the choir and the audience, in the Ancilla Domini Chapel. The chapel is on the grounds of The Center at Donaldson and the concert will take place at 7 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 15.

The public is welcome to this free event to share in the anticipation of the celebration of Christmas. A reception will follow the performance.

The Ancilla Domini Chapel is located at 9601 Union Rd., Donaldson, just west of Plymouth, two miles south of U.S. 30. The concert and The Center at Donaldson are sponsored by the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ.

For more information on the concert visit the The Center at Donaldson Facebook page.

Lilly Endowment makes grants to encourage youth to explore theology

INDIANAPOLIS — Lilly Endowment Inc. is awarding $44.5 million in grants to help 82 private four-year colleges and universities located in 29 states and the District of Columbia to develop high school youth theology institutes.

Holy Cross College at Notre Dame, Saint Mary’s College at Notre Dame, and the University of Saint Francis in Fort Wayne are among the colleges and universities receiving the high school youth theology grants.

The grants are part of the endowment’s commitment to identify and cultivate a cadre of theologically minded youth who will become leaders in church and society. Although some schools are independent, many reflect the religious heritage of their founding Christian traditions, including Baptist, Brethren, Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Reformed traditions, as well as Catholic, non-denominational, Pentecostal and historic African-American Christian communities.

With guidance and support from religion and theology faculty, chaplains and local pastors, young people will study sacred Scripture and pivotal theological texts; take part in service projects and hands-on ministry experiences; examine the moral and ethical dimensions of contemporary issues; and learn about religious practices, including prayer, contemplation and worship. Most programs will take place during the summer and offer short-term residential experiences to groups of students as small as 24 and as large as 300.

An additional grant to the Forum for Theological Exploration will establish a program that will bring together leaders of the high school youth theology institutes to foster mutual learning and support.

Heather Smith makes commitment as a Providence Associate

SOUTH BEND — South Bend resident Heather Smith recently deepened her relationship with the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods as she made a commitment as a Providence Associate on Saturday, Nov. 14, joining 27 other 2015 associates associated with the Sisters of Providence.

Director of Providence Associates Sister Diane Mason said in order to become a Providence Associate, a candidate is paired with a Sister

Catholics on a Mission collect sacramentals

Catholics on a Mission is about one month away from its 2016 mission trip (Jan. 8-19, 2016). Missionaries are actively collecting sacramentals — rosaries, holy cards, miraculous medals, scapulars — sacred vessels and vestments and religious statues to distribute in Costa Rica. Items may be dropped off or shipped to: Dave MacDonald, G A MacDonald Associates Insurance Agency, 2200 Lake Ave., Suite 120, Fort Wayne, IN 46805, 260-422-5377. In the photo, Franciscan Brother Juan Diego Maria, center, and Jacob Schmitz of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, Fort Wayne, right, distribute a prayer card and medal to a man asking for prayers for his community in Costa Rica.

St. Anthony traditions open Year of Mercy

ANGOLA — The parishioners of St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church in Angola are planning various acts of mercy to celebrate the Holy Year of Mercy beginning Dec. 8.

The public is invited to a Live Drive-Thru Nativity at St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church, 700 W. Maumee St., Angola, on Sunday, Dec. 20, from 5-8 p.m. where, in the comfort of their own car, people can experience the Christmas story in four live scenes. Throughout the journey they are accompanied by pre-recorded music at each scene supplied by John Peters. While Matt and Susie Zimmer have coordinated live animals at each of the scenes, over 150 costumed children and adults of the parish assume the roles of the people of Bethlehem and surrounding countryside.

Glen and Bonnie Sniadecki who are co-chairing this year’s event with Marilyn Karpinski, said, “As in years past, this event is open to the public free of charge. It is St. Anthony’s Christmas gift to the community.”

In addition to the Live Drive-Thru Nativity, The Gingerbread Project is underway with members of the youth group making and delivering gingerbread houses to members of the parish who are homebound, and the Angel Tree Program, chaired by Judy and Neil Nusbaum, is collecting donations of food and Christmas gifts to be delivered to numerous adopted families in need.
Catholic Charities welcomes two dynamic administrators

BY KAY COZAD

FORT WAYNE — Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend has added two new names to its management team roster this fall. Mike Lewandowski has been named chief operating officer and Bobbie Golani fills the clinical director’s position.

Lewandowski brings a plethora of gifts and talents to the table at Catholic Charities with his unique background in counseling psychology and IT expertise. His strength, he says, lies in his organizational and analytic skills. “I’m good at making things run, making new programs, data analysis,” he says, adding, “I’m the man behind the curtain.”

Holding a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Purdue University and a master’s in counseling psychology from Ball State University, Lewandowski brings with him experience from a diverse career background ranging from clinical work in an acute psych unit and developmental center to teaching at the University of Saint Francis and private practice. He spent 16 years at SCAN (Stop Child Abuse Neglect) first as program administrator and then as operations administrator.

Lewandowski is happy to be at Catholic Charities where he can get to know the people. His vision for the future of Catholic Charities’ mission? “I see this as growing. There are good people here, so dedicated. We’ll expand. We have room and are structured better for expansion,” he says confidently.

With his military family background he adds, “We moved a lot. So I can adapt to anything. I look forward to the challenges.”

Lewandowski and his wife Deb of 40 years are long-time parishioners of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Fort Wayne. They have two grown children, three grandchildren with their fourth on the way, and three dogs.

Bobbie Golani’s new position as clinical director at Catholic Charities is a “positively great fit,” she says, referring to her rich administrative experience. She is humbled to work with the dedicated staff at Catholic Charities who serve the at-risk population in the area. Originally from the Detroit area, she and her husband Lee have been residents of Fort Wayne since 2007. They have two grown children.

“Armed with a bachelor’s degree in early childhood education and a lot of years at SCAN (Stop Child Abuse Neglect) first as program administrator and then as operations administrator, I have two amazing supervisors,” says Golani, adding that she will “supervise the supervisors” for compliance with mandates and requirements for each program. Her hope for the future includes building new programs to support the diocese, parishes, parishioners and the community at large.

“I’m excited to have the opportunity to be here and do the work in the community,” says Golani. “It’s all about the people.”

Sharing the warmth in northeastern Indiana

BY BONNIE ELBERSON

AUBURN — Many families will be sharing the warmth this winter as Catholic Charities’ Auburn Community Service Center assists those in need by providing them with new or gently used winter coats. A program of more than 10 years’ standing, the center’s “Share the Warmth” coat giveaway attracts families who need warm outerwear to brave Indiana’s chilly winter temperatures.

Director Patti Sheppard notes that the center serves 450 families each month. “We’re quite busy with the dedicated staff at Catholic Charities who serve the at-risk population in the area. Originally from the Detroit area, she and her husband Lee have been residents of Fort Wayne since 2007. They have two grown children.

“We’re very fortunate,” says Sheppard. “This is a very caring and giving community.” People volunteer, sharing their time, their talents and their money, she adds.

And good corporate citizens like Eaton Corporation make the job of assisting the less fortunate a whole lot easier.

Eaton Corporation is a diversified power management company and global technology leader, and its Auburn facility designs, engineers and manufactures clutch components for the global commercial vehicle industry.

This corporation with a heart helps Catholic Charities in other ways, as well. Just recently Eaton employees donated their time to paint the center’s offices and donated their time to paint the center’s offices and donated their time to paint the center’s offices and donated their time to paint the center’s offices and donated their time to paint the center’s offices.

Sheppard is especially grateful to Eaton Corporation for their recent donation of brand new coats with a retail value of nearly $3,000 for the annual effort. “They’ve always assisted us,” she says. They know there’s a “pretty desperate need.”

Eaton Corporation’s South Bend location has a long tradition of helping Catholic Charities and other local organizations.

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Two employees of Eaton Corporation arrive at Catholic Charities’ offices in Auburn with coats for the center’s “Share the Warmth” coat giveaway. The coats were purchased and donated by the Eaton Corporation.

Auburn Community Service Center’s food pantry serves 450 families each month. “We’re quite busy with that,” says Sheppard, and many of those shopping for food also take advantage of the additional programs. She tells of one Ligonier family who came to get their children’s backpacks filled with school supplies and were delighted to leave with warm winter coats for everyone. The center provides one-stop shopping for many needy families.

“We’re very fortunate,” says Sheppard. “This is a very caring and giving community.” People volunteer, sharing their time, their talents and their money, she adds.

And good corporate citizens like Eaton Corporation make the job of assisting the less fortunate a whole lot easier.
New mobile unit takes Catholic Charities to the peripheries

BY TIM JOHNSON

FORT WAYNE — Catholic Charities is hitting the road. Armed with a new mobile unit, Gloria Whitcraft, Chief Executive Officer of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, said, “Our goal is to serve as many people in the diocese as possible.”

Catholic Charities has permanent operations with offices in Allen, St. Joseph and DeKalb counties, but “if we had a mobile unit, we could dispatch the mobile unit to each county at least a couple of times per month to serve the poor and vulnerable,” Whitcraft told Today’s Catholic.

Whitcraft’s goal is to make Catholic Charities a resource to the parishes throughout the diocese. Building that relationship with the parishes is a top priority for Catholic Charities, she noted.

Whitcraft said the mobile unit should assist Catholic Charities’ adherence of Pope Francis’ call to “go out to the peripheries.”

“Don’t expect the people to come to us in our comfortable offices,” Whitcraft said. “We need to go out and serve them, find them and make sure they have access to the basic needs.”

The goals of the mobile unit include attending to the needs of Catholic Charities’ target population — where they live, work and go to school. Through the mobile unit, Catholic Charities plans to conduct rolling research, learn the specific needs of their target population and develop effective strategies to address those concerns.

By being visible in each county, Catholic Charities also desires to create opportunities for local funding through county-specific foundations and investors and establish collaborative relationships with other agencies, bringing in partners who can address needs that don’t fall within the scope of Catholic Charities’ mission. The mobile unit will also give Catholic Charities the opportunity to expand the organization’s reach in a cost-effective way and nurture strategic partnerships with parish communities, expanding awareness of the agency’s mission and increasing engagement opportunities with parish members.

“The goal of Catholic Charities is to help people live a dignified life, and we want to provide the resources to help them get there.”

GLORIA WHITCRAFT

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades offers a blessing at a Dec. 4 service officially kicking off Catholic Charities’ Mobile Division. At right, he blesses the interior of the new mobile unit.

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades blessed the mobile unit on Friday, Dec. 4, in the parking lot of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne. During this Year of Mercy, the services of Catholic Charities fall under the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. This includes providing food for the hungry, whether through the food pantry such as the one operated in South Bend, or through food vouchers. They also give drink to the thirsty and clothe the naked. The Auburn office offers a coat program, and in Fort Wayne and South Bend, Catholic Charities assists with financial vouchers for clothing needs.

Catholic Charities offers resource assistance with rent as well, and offers provisional services for those suffering both emotionally and spiritually. They also offer home-based and school-based programs for those dealing with illnesses. Catholic Charities can also provide family development needs such as budgeting issues.

Whitcraft hopes to take the mobile unit to various parishes in the rural counties where Catholic Charities does not have operations. At first, there will be needed research to see what needs are unmet in each county. Whether it is working with issues of teen pregnancy, teen parenting or getting teens to graduate from high school, the needs could vary from county to county.

“We want to find what is the greatest need in each county that is unmet, that is aligned with our mission, aligned with our target population — the poor and vulnerable — and is aligned with our core competencies,” Whitcraft said.

At this point, Whitcraft is not going to be too rigid or too fixed on the services that could be available. “It’s really important to get into the community and find out what the needs are,” she said. Catholic Charities would not want to duplicate services already available through other social services agencies. And they hope to partner with other local agencies to provide a means for the poor and vulnerable to access services.

The artistic wrap on the mobile unit will be a visible sign Catholic Charities is taking its services out to the peripheries, being part of the New Evangelization. “If the people of the diocese see the Church — and Catholic Charities is an extension of the Church — out in their community as often as possible, serving people in need, then that has to be good for the Church,” Whitcraft noted.

The vehicle and the graphics wrap on the vehicle were generous donations. Catholic Charities’ board member Father Glenn Kohrman made the connections with the donors.

Volunteers are also needed for this effort in each county. Catholic Charities would like a volunteer recruiter. Then additional volunteers would help with the scheduling of appointments for services. At present, Catholic Charities is networking with parishes and community partners to explain the purpose of the mobile unit.

Like the many services of Catholic Charities, the mobile unit is dependent upon the generosity of the faithful. Donors may contribute online or mail a check to Catholic Charities, 915 S. Clinton St., Fort Wayne, IN 46802.

“We need people to prayerfully consider support for the mobile unit,” Whitcraft said. The goal of Catholic Charities is to help people live a dignified life, “and we want to provide the resources to help them get there,” she said.
Catholic Charities partners with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to serve the community

BY TRISH LINNER

SOUTH BEND — In 2012, Notre Dame sponsored an interfaith forum where Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades was introduced to President Rick Jones from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS). This introduction led to a meeting between Bishop Rhoades, President Jones and local public affairs representatives from the LDS South Bend Stake (a stake is comparable to a Catholic diocese) to discuss ways the LDS could collaborate with Catholic Charities to serve the community.

“Bishop Rhoades was kind enough to meet with us to discuss humanitarian and religious freedom issues and concerns we hold in common with our friends in the Catholic Church,” said Jones.

The meeting would lead to a collaboration that is now in its third year. “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints encourages its local leaders to direct the collaborative efforts of their congregations according to the needs and resources of their communities. This is something the LDS Church does worldwide,” said Tina Slabach, public affairs director, South Bend Stake.

Slabach helps organize donations from the LDS, and assists with the delivery to Catholic Charities.

“We were inspired to seek out service opportunities with Catholic Charities and we are so grateful that Bishop Rhoades and the leadership of Catholic Charities agreed to allow us to help them in their already amazing South Bend-St. Joseph County community efforts,” Slabach said.

Catholic Charities has been serving the community since its inception in 1922. The West Region Center in South Bend typically serves about 80 families with approximately 150 children with their annual Christmas program in addition to the services provided year round.

“We are always grateful for the support Catholic Charities receives from businesses, schools, groups and individuals,” said Claire Coleman, West Region director, Catholic Charities. “This partnership between Catholic Charities and the LDS gives us more opportunities to serve the community.”

The LDS community is grateful to help. President Jones commented, “Catholic Charities does great work in tirelessly serving people’s needs in the South Bend area. Every relief organizations needs support and the people of our congregations in and around the South Bend area have been blessed through giving of their time and resources. Doing good, feels good. We look forward to continued combined efforts to help where we can.”

The South Bend Indiana LDS Stake is comprised of nine congregations in five buildings, located in Niles, Michigan, South Bend, Plymouth, Elkhart and Warsaw.

Slabach said, “One of the things we have loved about being involved in this holiday project on an ongoing basis is that it has allowed opportunities to serve for all of our organizations. As the entire stake is asked to be involved, it can be logistically difficult. Each unit solves the logistical problems differently, and we seem to get more efficient every year. In this, our third year of partnering with Catholic Charities, the adult organizations, such as the Relief Society and Elder’s Quorum, made quilts, scarves, hats, mittens and kept track of requested donations. The youth organizations in all nine congregations came together one Saturday for an evening activity to sort and bundle the donations into individual hygiene kits. In addition, they hand-made fleece blankets and Christmas greeting cards. It has been a truly wonderful opportunity for everyone in the South Bend stake to emulate the love of our Savior in our community.”

“We are very grateful for the donations from the LDS, especially the personal hygiene kits that they put together each year,” said Coleman. “They are a real blessing to families, and a great gift for teenagers. They specialize the kits for men, women and teens so that each person gets what they need. We donate them to families at Christmas and throughout the year to people in need. The LDS donations make a real difference for the families we serve, especially at Christmas time” Coleman said.

In addition to the Christmas program, Catholic Charities serves the community with year-round services for families in need.

Coleman noted that while it is always wonderful to have gifts to give at Christmas time, Catholic Charities serves people in need year round. “People need food, they need simple things like toilet paper and laundry soap. We welcome contributions all year.”

For more information about Catholic Charities, visit www.ccfwsb.org. To learn more about the LDS humanitarian efforts visit www.ldsphilanthropies.org.

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The ‘Waze’ of Providence

I

just after I was named auxiliary bishop of Los Angeles, my bishop, Archbishop Gomez, told me to get the Waze app for my iPhone. He explained that it was a brilliant stupid way to navigate Los Angeles’ impossibly LA traffic. I followed his instructions and have indeed used the app practically on a daily basis since my arrival on the West Coast. Waze not only gives you directions, but it also provides very accurate information regarding time to your destination, obstacles on the road, the presence of police, etc. Most importantly, it routes you around traffic jams, which positively abound in the City of Angeles.

Especially in my first days and weeks on the new job, I basically had no idea where I was going — and my duties required that I be all over the place. LAX, Pasadena, Inglewood, Granada Hills, Ventura, Oxnard, Santa Barbara, Santa Maria, etc., etc. And often I was required to jump from one dark to the next. So I would program an address into the Waze app and trust it, to guide my way.

Among us, who, in time, learn to trust it, to guide their lives by it, even when it asks them to go by what seem circuitous routes? Happily enough, yes. There is a most powerful feature of the Waze app worth considering in this spiritual context. When you get lost or perhaps decide that you know better than the navigator, she doesn’t upbraid you or compel you to return to the route she had originally chosen. She simply keeps track of your progress and determines the best way to get to your goal, given the choices you have made. God indeed has a plan in each of us. He can’t be determined, In His wisdom and love, the best way for us to get to our goal, which is full union with Him. But Israel of old, as we all wander from the path, convinced that we are brighter than the Lord of the universe, or perhaps just enamored of asserting our own freedom. But God never gives up on us; rather, He re-shuffles the deck, recalculate and sets a new course for us. Watch this process, by the way, as the Scriptural narrative unfolds. And watch it happen — again and again, in your own life: what looks like a circuitous route for the family on that first Sunday.

Happily enough, yes.

The best preparation

Advent preparation didn’t start out the way I had hoped. I thought I had chosen the right things. I had cleaned our house, reading it for the correct liturgical decorations. I looked up some Scripture readings. I planned to take out some book favorites of the season for the kids. I pulled out our Advent wreath several days before the first Sunday and had purchased four brand new Advent candles a full week ahead of time. I put those candles in a safe place so I’d be ready to light them with the family on that first Sunday. But it turned out that it was too safe a place because when the first Sunday rolled around, those candles were nowhere to be found.

What’s more, I had been so confident that I didn’t even look for the candles until dinner was almost ready to be served. Could they be in the cabinet with the decorative, seasonal items? On top of the fridge? Not there either. How about my room? The laundry area? The junk drawer? No, no, no, and not a good dozen other places either. My girls and I frantically searched the house, top to bottom, but to no avail.

My daughter works at a Christian bookstore but by that time the store was plumb out of Advent candles too, with a good dozen other places other than the Lord of the universe, or perhaps just enamored of asserting their own freedom. But God never gives up on us; rather, He re-shuffles the deck, recalculates and sets a new course for us. Watch this process, by the way, as the Scriptural narrative unfolds. And watch it happen — again and again, in your own life: what looks like a circuitous route.

By now you too may have experienced a bit of frustration and more than a frazzled moment or two this Advent season. If you haven’t you’re lucky. It’s hard trying to focus on the spiritual dimension of Advent with your family, while trying to accomplish the practical aspect of planning a memorable and joyous Christmas celebration and still manage the day-to-day duties and possibly deal with bad weather to boot. (Pressure)

Joy is in order not because the penitential season is ending, but because Jesus soon will come among us. He will do it in His own way, through those who believe in Him. What’s more, I had been so confident that I didn’t even look for the candles until dinner was almost ready to be served. Could they be in the cabinet with the decorative, seasonal items? On top of the fridge? Not there either. How about my room? The laundry area? The junk drawer? No, no, no, and not a good dozen other places either. My girls and I frantically searched the house, top to bottom, but to no avail.

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The plain pine Advent wreath graced our table untraditionally, with nothing but a large, green, balsam-scented candle smack in the middle of the wreath, adorning my ineptitude. At least it smelled good.

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Be joyful — Jesus will soon come again

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

3rd Sunday of Advent

Lk 3:10-18

This weekend’s Gospel passage is the third Sunday of Advent. The Book of Zephaniah furnishes the first reading. It is a short book, only three brief chapters. Little is known about this prophet, beyond what can be assumed from the writing itself. This much, however, is known. Zephaniah was the son of Chichi and traced his ancestry to Hezekiah, presumably King Hezekiah of Judah.

It appears that the book was written between 640 B.C. and 609 B.C., or during the reign of King Josiah of Judah. Josiah was a reformer, and his reforms were religious in intent and in impact. Such is not surprising. The kings saw themselves as the “chosen” of God, and if they viewed themselves properly, as representatives and agents of God. Aside from all else, their duty was to drive the people more closely to God.

Zephaniah, obviously, supported this effort.

His reading is an exuberant and bold exclamation of joy. When the people are faithful to God, they bring peace and prosperity upon themselves. So, if they draw more closely to God, if they are more attentive to the Covenant, their good fortune will be assured. Their enemies will be turned away. They will be secure.

For the second reading on this weekend the Church presents a passage from the Epistle to the Philippians. Philippi was a city, in what today is Greece, founded centuries before Christ and named to honor King Philip, the father of Alexander the Great.

By the time of the first century A.D., it was an important center in the Roman Empire, and it was military base. It was a battleground between the Christians and the Romans. The modern movement to bring peace and prosperity to the city was a triumph of faith.

The Bishop of the Epistle proclaims that this holy transformation has unfolded. And watch it happen — again and again, in your own life: what looks like a circuitous route.

BARRON, page 12

WORD ON FIRE

BISHOP ROBERT BARRON

among us, who, in time, learn to trust it, to guide their lives by it, even when it asks them to go by what seem circuitous routes? Happily enough, yes. There is a most powerful feature of the Waze app worth considering in this spiritual context. When you get lost or perhaps decide that you know better than the navigator, she doesn’t upbraid you or compel you to return to the route she had originally chosen. She simply keeps track of your progress and determines the best way to get to your goal, given the choices you have made. God indeed has a plan in each of us. He can’t be determined, In His wisdom and love, the best way for us to get to our goal, which is full union with Him. But Israel of old, as we all wander from the path, convinced that we are brighter than the Lord of the universe, or perhaps just enamored of asserting our own freedom. But God never gives up on us; rather, He re-shuffles the deck, recalculates and sets a new course for us. Watch this process, by the way, as the Scriptural narrative unfolds. And watch it happen — again and again, in your own life: what looks like a circuitous route?

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Synod-2015, Revisited

A s I write, just before Thanksgiving, it’s been over a month since Synod-2015 finished its work. Yet there is still no official translation of the Synod’s Final Report into the major world languages, and it is based on the original Italian text that was published back in October. The Synod has led to all sorts of confusion about its contents, and the “Relatio Finalis” is an impressive, often-moving statement of the Church’s convictions about chastity, marriage, and the family: biblically rich, theologically sensitive, and well-crafted to meet the challenge of the cultural tsunami driven here between “doctrine” and “pastoral practice,” for the traditional discipline of the Church is based on the conviction that what is at stake is the integrity of individuals before the Lord: in other words, worthiness to receive Holy Communion, both of which are matters of living in the truth.

3. In reaffirming these classics of Catholic faith and practice, the “Relatio Finalis” affirms that there can be no weakness driven here between doctrine and pastoral practice, for the traditional discipline of the Church is based on the conviction that what is at stake is the integrity of individuals before the Lord: in other words, worthiness to receive Holy Communion, both of which are matters of living in the truth.

4. In its now widely-controverted paragraph 85, the “Final Report” urges the Church’s pastors to provide whatever canonical/legal help they can in resolving difficult and painful situations of marital breakdown. It also underscores the importance of effective marriage-preparation programs, which are urgently needed in settings where the ambient public culture’s understanding of marriage and the Church’s understanding of marriage are often dramatically different. Which is to say, marriage preparation should be seen as an integral part of the New Evangelization, and an important ecclesial mission of mercy among the walking wounded who are struggling through what Pope Francis has described as the post-battlefield wreckage of contemporary culture.

5. The “Final Report” emphasizes that “pastoral accompaniment” of the divorced and civilly remarried by a priest in the “internal forum” must always be “according to the teaching of the Church.” Those seven words, inserted in the “Relatio Finalis” in the last 24 hours of the Synod and providing the necessary anchor for any truly pastoral accompaniment in the case of the divorced and civilly remarried (or indeed in any other case). For in pastoral life, as in the Gospels, truth and mercy work together.

6. The “Final Report” urges the Church’s pastors to provide whatever canonical/legal help they can in resolving difficult and painful situations of marital breakdown. It also underscores the importance of effective marriage-preparation programs, which are urgently needed in settings where the ambient public culture’s understanding of marriage and the Church’s understanding of marriage are often dramatically different. Which is to say, marriage preparation should be seen as an integral part of the New Evangelization, and an important ecclesial mission of mercy among the walking wounded who are struggling through what Pope Francis has described as the post-battlefield wreckage of contemporary culture.

7. The “Relatio Finalis” (unlike the Synod’s working document) celebrates children as a great blessing, praises large families and urges support for families with special-needs kids.

8. In all of this, the “Final Report” emphasizes that the Church reads the “signs of the times” through the lens of divine revelation (in this case, the ambiguous teaching of the Lord Jesus and St. Paul). The “signs of the times” do not judge the deposit of faith, although it is most challenging of those “signs” can highlight the Church’s failures in teaching and witnessing to the truth.


**SCRIPTY SEARCH**

Gospel for December 13, 2015

Luke 3:10-18

10. Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the Third Sunday of Advent, Cycle C: the messages of John the Baptist. The answers can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

**JOHN SPEAKS**

B L W G N I W O N N I W
C U L D E R E W S N A N
T H R E S H I N G T A
H J A N F W L L E A H D
H F C A S T O
N R T L F T W H T K I O
G A L I K E W I S E W F
D E J O N R J O I F E P
A L A D N A S I R T R P
I C O L L A M E H T A F
S O L D I E R S C H N O
G T H A N I U F G H S Y

**Finnian of Clonard**

Feast Dec. 12

This Irish abbot, known as the master and teacher of saints in the period following St. Patrick, was reported to be from Leinster, where he began establishing monasteries including his great monastery at Clonard on the Boyne, which drew 3,000 disciples.

**George Weigel** is Distinguished Senior Fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.

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

**Bishop Robert Barron** is an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and the founder of Word on Fire Catholic Ministries.
ICCL kicks off basketball season with classic matchups

**BY JOE KOZINSKI**

ST. JOSEPH COUNTY — The Inter-City Catholic League kicked off its 2015-2016 winter march with classic matchups and close contests as the 14 varsity squads duked it out at Marian and Saint Joseph high schools.

Christ the King started their season off with a huge win over the Mishawaka Catholic Saints as JR Konieczny and Jack Ivey, Chase Tzuzuowksi and Miguel Zyniewicz on their way to a 44-25 victory over Queen of Peace.

The Panthers of St. Anthony outlasted St. Joseph, 43-32, as Phillip Robles netted 11 for the winners and T. Garnett had 16 in the loss.

A full schedule is planned for the 14 varsity schools.

CYO basketball season off to good start

**BY MICHELLE CASTLEMAN**

FORT WAYNE — The 2015-2016 Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) season kicked off last weekend in several different gyms. In boys’ action, Coach Zach Palmer’s St. Therese Crusaders got off to a good start getting by St. Joseph, Decatur, 34-36.

They were led by John Peterson with 16 points and Sam Alfaro who contributed six big points off the bench. Palmer explained, “As a team we had the lowest amount of turnovers in a game so far this season which made a big difference.” For the girls, St. Rose-St. Louis downed St. Charles 8 at St. Elizabeth by a score of 36-26. Eighth-grader Abby Sheehan had 10 points and Audrey Renninger added 8. Molly Ream from St. Charles led all scorers with 12 points and Allie Tribur scored 11. Coach Clancy Shank reported his St. John the Baptist, Fort Wayne, team beat St. Therese. “It was a great team effort on the defensive end,” Shank report-ed. Dori Javins was the top scorer for the Eagles with 15 points. She also had five steals. Audrey Vassel and Taylor Bransfield added eight each and Libby Bierbaum chipped in seven points and four steals.

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CLOSE TO HOME!
Growing kids, shrinking screens: how they could stay safe online

BY MARK PATTISON

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Teaching children to stay safe in what for adults can seem to be an ever-dawning online world is a tall order.

Adrienne Renner, who teaches at Presentation High School in San Jose, California, has been on the school’s technology team ever since she was hired 23 years ago. But it’s only been in the past couple of years that her freshman-required course on computer apps included a unit on digital safety and ethics.

It wasn’t enough that new students knew how to master Google Docs and the other Google apps, or how to use an iPad, basic keyboarding skills, or any of the other tech tasks needed to get classwork and homework taken care of in a timely manner.

“We had a director of technology at Presentation introduce me to common sense.org,” Renner told Catholic News Service. “It was when we were making changes in the curriculum. We felt it was important to have the students learn about digital citizenship: privacy, copyright information, how to do research and that kind of thing.”

Common Sense, a nonprofit with offices in New York, Washington, Los Angeles and San Francisco, aims to improve the lives of children, families and educators through its educational materials and information resources. It developed the digital citizenship curriculum that Renner incorporated as one of the six units of her course.

Generally, learning is not supposed to be fun. But there’s always the “aha” moment when scales fall from the eyes.

“This creates so much discussion it’s unbelievable,” Renner said of the digital citizenship unit. “The conversation about cyberbullying, the way students take selfies and the kind of things that they post online. Those are conversations that we have for sure.”

She added, “Some of the topics are about privacy, keeping things private and making sure students aren’t changing their privacy settings. What kind of relationships they have online, what to do if someone you don’t know contacts you” are also ripe subjects for conversations.

Renner noted, in addition to “the digital footprints that you leave behind (that) is very important and what you do during high school could follow you into college. It could affect you from getting into college. And carries you into your career. If someone does a Google search on you, ... it’s a lot of topics, and they’re all very relevant.”

There was no pushback from parents at the Catholic high school, sponsored by the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. “No. No, no, no, no, no. Not at all,” Renner told CNS in a Nov. 24 telephone interview. “We are right smack in the middle of Silicon Valley where all these social media companies are. Our parents and administrators are all aware of what our kids are using. They want them to be safe and using things appropriately.”

Michael Robb, Common Sense’s director of research, said, “One of the great things that schools can do to teach digital citizenship, how to be responsible and safe online, is to think about social media in a larger context, that what you do online is part of who you are offline.”

He added Common Sense’s digital citizenship curriculum, tailored to different age groups, is used in thousands of schools across the nation, and is free. Robb, in a Nov. 20 telephone interview with CNS, said that, in essence, kids take to new tech like a duck to water.

“I think there’s something generational going on. A lot of these things were already there. It doesn’t seem like new technology to them,” he said. “It doesn’t have that fancy sheen to it. They’re not afraid of it. They’re engaged from a lower age. That’s not to say that they’re all expert users.”

Robb said the Common Sense Census, which polled children ages 8-18 online about their media usage habits, talked little about homework issues, but how they used media while doing their homework. Over 70 percent of them are listening to media while doing their homework, he noted; 50 percent are watching TV or engaged in social media simultaneously while doing their homework.

There was little as well about how frequently students used technology to complete homework assignments either at home or school. Robb said there are a number of directions a future survey could take, this being one of them.
**WHAT’S HAPPENING?**

**WHAT’S HAPPENING** carries announcements about upcoming events in the diocese. Send in your announcement at least two weeks prior to the event. Mail to: Today's Catholic, P.O. Box 11169, Fort Wayne 46865; or email: flogan@diocesefwbs.org. Events that require an admission charge or payment to participate will receive one free listing. For additional listings of that event, please call our advertising sales staff at (260) 456-2824 to purchase space.

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**Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols**

Granger — Lessons and Carols with the choirs of St. Pius X will be offered at all Christmas Masses. The children’s choir and adult ensemble will sing at 4:30 p.m. The Sunday evening choir will sing at 7 p.m. The Sunday morning choir will sing at 11:15 p.m. Instrumentalists will join all choirs. The parish adult and youth handbell choirs will play prelude music 15 minutes before Mass on Christmas day at 9 and 11 a.m.

**Christmas cookie and candy sale**

Monroeville — The St. Rose Altar and Rosary Society will have a Christmas cookie and candy sale sold by the pound on Saturday, Dec. 12, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the Monroeville Fire Station, 205 W. South St.

**Holy Hour planned for New Year’s Eve**

Fort Wayne — Father George Gabet, FSSP, will lead a Holy Hour on New Year’s Eve at Sacred Heart Parish, 4643 Gaywood Dr., from 11:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. There will be Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament as well as the rosary.

**Cookie and wreath sale**

Mishawaka — The St. Monica Rosary Society will have a cookie and wreath sale Saturday, Dec. 12, in the church basement, 222 W. Mishawaka Ave. A variety of cookies will be sold for $3 per pound. Seasonal wreaths will also be sold.

**Pancake and sausage breakfast with Santa**

Fort Wayne — The St. Charles Athletic Association, will have a pancake and sausage breakfast Sunday, Dec. 13, from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., at the church, 4910 Trier Rd. All the pancakes you can eat and a visit with Santa. Enter at door No. 9. Cost is $4 for adults, $3 per child 12 and under or $15 per family.

**Knights host Sunday breakfast at Most Precious Blood**

Fort Wayne — The Knights will be serving a breakfast Sunday, Dec. 13, from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the gymnasium at Most Precious Blood, 1515 Barthold Street. $8 for adults, $4 for children 6-12 and $20 per family. Carryout will be available. All proceeds will benefit the Bill Roth Memorial Scholarship Fund.

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**Mass Mob gathering announced**

South Bend — A Mass Mob style group bringing solidarity and support to great churches in the area will gather at St. Anthony de Padua, 2114 E Jefferson Blvd., for the 4:30 p.m. Mass on Saturday, Dec. 19.

**Lessons and Carols**

Elkhart — St. Vincent de Paul Parish and School, 1108 S. Main St., will present an Advent festival of Lessons and Carols on Monday, Dec. 14, at 6 p.m. Reception to follow in Vincent Hall. No charge for admission.

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Dear Friends,

The season of Advent is always a special time for us as Catholics, a time of expectant waiting as we look forward to celebrating Jesus’ Nativity. This year, we have even more reason to rejoice, since we are entering a Holy Year of Mercy as decreed by our Holy Father, Pope Francis. During this extraordinary Jubilee, Pope Francis has encouraged us to meet people’s real needs, offering concrete assistance to those who are suffering in our community.

I can’t think of a better way to describe our mission here at Catholic Charities, and I am thrilled to report that we will be able to bring that concrete assistance to even more people in our diocese in the coming year through our new mobile unit. Thanks to the generous support of anonymous donors, this mobile unit will allow us to take our programs and services on the road as we visit each of the 11 counties where we don’t have a physical office.

While we are thrilled to receive the donated vehicle, we still need support in the form of operational dollars in order to bring services to each of these counties. Your contributions will help us staff our mobile unit, so that we can partner with people seeking assistance, helping them to enhance their capacity to build a better life for themselves and their families. Up until now, access to the services and resources they need has been a real challenge in rural areas of the diocese. Through the mobile unit, we can address those needs, relieving poverty and strengthening communities in the process.

Please consider how you might partner with us as we extend the love of Jesus to thousands of people in need of services. With your help, we can fulfill our mission — serving those in need as Christ would have us do — during this special Year of Mercy.

God Bless,

Gloria Whitcraft, Chief Executive Officer

May the balm of mercy reach everyone...

...both believers and those far away, as a sign that the Kingdom of God is already present in our midst!

— Pope Francis