VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Sharing and celebrating the joy of faith with thousands of Catholic teenagers from around the globe was a rare moment that not many people are able to experience, a U.S. teen said.

“IT was a different atmosphere than what I’m used to, but it’s good because it shows that the beauty of the Catholic Church is there,” Emily Sullivan told Catholic News Service April 25.

Emily, her brother Ryan and parents Matt and Susan, came from North Carolina to participate in the Year of Mercy celebration for young teens April 23-24 in Rome.

Both siblings, who are preparing to receive the sacrament of confirmation, said that despite the language barrier, they were able to join in singing and praying during the April 23 youth rally at Rome’s Olympic Stadium.

“It was awesome; the energy was insane,” Emily said. “The people knew all the lyrics and they were jamming out. So we came up with a couple of words that we could sing along. It was really cool to be in that atmosphere.”

To see so many Catholic teens in one place was “definitely encouraging,” she added.

For Ryan, attending the April 24 Mass in St. Peter’s Square was the highlight of his pilgrimage. “It was great seeing the pope,” and “meeting other
Wuerl: Politically correct ‘choice’ rhetoric hides ugly truth of abortion

By Mark Zimmermann

WASHINGTON (CNS) — One day after Planned Parenthood’s president, Cecile Richards, spoke at Georgetown University, Washington Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl celebrated a University Mass for Life for college students at a nearby Catholic church, encouraging them to stand up for God’s gift of human life.

A Georgetown student group’s invitation to Richards, the head of the nation’s largest abortion provider, to speak April 20 at the country’s oldest Catholic university drew nationwide criticism and was countered by a week of pro-life activities at the school.

In his homily at the April 21 Mass at Epiphany Catholic Church, Cardinal Wuerl warned about a powerful politically correct movement and environment “all around us. ... It says to set aside such things as the value of human life and substitute the politically correct position that actually you should be free to choose to kill the unborn child. But the word of God says to us, ‘Don’t conform yourselves to this thing.’”

The congregation of nearly 150 people included students from local universities, along with faculty members, campus ministry staff, and young adults from the Washington area. Cardinal Wuerl was joined by five concelebrating priests who serve in campus ministry.

A group of about two dozen Georgetown University students, along with faculty and staff members, met at their school’s gates and walked several blocks to the Mass.

At the church, the students joining them came from schools including George Washington University and the Catholic University of America, the University of Maryland, Howard University and American University.

The congregation was greeted by Father Adam Park, the pastor of Epiphany Parish, who also is the chaplain at George Washington University’s Newman Catholic Student Center. “Today in our culture when our Catholic faith is not always respected, we want to reaffirm our Catholic identity and witness to the Gospel value of life,” Father Park said.

While not specifically mentioning Georgetown University or the Richards controversy in his homily, Cardinal Wuerl did address several related underlying issues.

The day before Richards was greeted by a standing ovation by Georgetown students at her speech on campus. In her opening remarks, she expressed hope that Hoyas for Choice, an unofficial student group on campus that advocates for keeping abortion legal would someday be recognized as “an official campus group” there, adding, “a girl can dream.”

In his homily, Cardinal Wuerl encouraged students not to be “deceived by the politically correct rhetoric that uses words to hide true meaning. Those in favor of killing the unborn child often speak of ‘the product of conception’ opposed to the child in the womb. They speak about ‘facilitating the conclusion of the life cycle’ instead of ‘assisting a suicide.’ So it is with that buzz word ‘choice.’ When you use the word ‘choice,’ you have to complete the sentence. What is it you choose?”

He noted that students aren’t free to smoke in the university cafeteria or park wherever they want without consequences. “Choice only makes sense when you complete the sentence,” Cardinal Wuerl said. “The word ‘choice’ is a smokescreen behind which those killing unborn children take refuge. Every chance you get, blow that smoke away, so everyone knows what it is we’re talking about.”

Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl of Washington gives Communion to a young man during the April 21 University Mass for Life at Epiphany Catholic Church in Washington.

Cardinal Wuerl noted that the students had joined together “because we share a very different view of life, one that recognizes it truly as a gift from God. Life is something we are meant to embrace and cherish, to live and love.”

The cardinal noted how Pope Francis through his words and actions has demonstrated that all human life has God-given dignity and should be respected.

The cardinal closed his homily by sharing a story of how some years ago he visited a mission in South America, and held a 2-day-old baby whose mother had left him with the sisters because she could not care for him. He noted how the newborn held tightly to his finger, seeming to offer a message to him that he took to heart and shared with the college students: “My brothers and sisters, what you are doing this evening is responding to the call of many, many unborn children. Please be there for me. Please do not let me go. Please speak up for me.”

Students served as lectors and altar servers at the Mass, and the intentions offered included prayers for an end to war, terrorism, abortion, euthanasia, embryonic stem cell research and child abuse. They also prayed that students, faculty and staff at campuses would be given strength “to proclaim the dignity of life in words and deeds.”

Three Georgetown students who had been among the group that had walked to the Mass from their campus said afterward that the liturgy offered an inspiring ending to a challenging week at their university.

Anne Ewing, a Georgetown senior from Louisville, Kentucky, who is a pre-med student majoring in the biology of global health, said, “The thing that stuck out to me most was that life is a gift,” and the importance of “remembering that in your own life every day, it’s a gift you should cherish. I think that plans for studying to become an obstetrician.”

Mark Zimmermann is editor of the Catholic Standard, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Washington.
New nuncio to U.S. says he’s ready to listen and learn

BY CINDY WOODEN

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Archbishop Christophe Pierre, the new nuncio to the United States, said he is ready to learn about the Catholic Church in the country and will try his best to be Pope Francis’ emissary, particularly in promoting a church that is close to those who suffer.

The archbishop, who had a private meeting at the Vatican with Pope Francis April 21, gave interviews the next day to the English and the Italian programs of Vatican Radio.

The 70-year-old French native has been in the Vatican diplomatic corps for almost 40 years and said a nuncio’s job is to help the pope fulfill his ministry of building up the local churches, respecting their diversity, while keeping them united with the universal church.

“The difficulty or the challenge,” he said, “is to ‘listen, to be careful about what’s going on, to understand, to dialogue — I think that’s very important — to discover the beauty, the richness of the culture of the people, the way the people live, and to help the inculturation of the Gospel in a particular culture.’”

At the same time, he said, a nuncio’s mission is “to help the pope understand — the pope and those that work with him — to understand what’s going on.”

“The richness of the Catholic Church,” Archbishop Pierre said, comes from that combination of valuing peoples and cultures and their local expressions of faith while being united universally.

The archbishop told Vatican Radio’s English program, “I’m quite excited — sometimes fearful,” about leaving Mexico and going to the United States. He said his reaction was “oh” when the pope told him of his new assignment “because it’s such a big country, such a big history, but you know I’m trustful in God and very, very grateful for this mission which is given to me.”

“I know I have to learn in the same way that when I arrived in Mexico nine years ago I had to learn a lot and I’m still learning, so I’m sure that during this year the American people — particularly the bishops, the priests, the religious, the laypeople — will be my teachers,” he said. “I’m ready to learn.”

The first mission the pope gave his nuncio, and the whole church, obviously is to proclaim the Gospel, he said. Next, there is “the way the pope wants us and the church to be close to people, especially those who suffer, the poor. This is also what I’ve perceived in what he has told me and I will try my best to be a faithful emissary of the pope.”

Help earthquake survivors in Ecuador

On April 16, a 7.8-magnitude earthquake hit Ecuador. One of the most powerful in Latin America over the last two decades, it is known to have killed over 400 people with the toll still rising. Hundreds more have been injured, and there are reports of widespread damage to buildings, roads and other infrastructure.

Communications are down or intermittent, further complicating damage assessment and need.

Given the widespread impact, Catholic Relief Services is coordinating with other humanitarian organizations and partners to determine priorities.

Water, food and emergency shelter will be the biggest needs in the coming days.

The people of Ecuador urgently need your help.

Donate by phone:
Call 877-435-7277 from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. Eastern Time

Donate by mail:
Mail your check or money order to:
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Baltimore, MD 21297-0303

Correction:
Catholic faithful are welcome to attend ordinations to the priesthood, diaconate

The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend will be celebrating the priestly ordination of three men this year: Deacon Bob Garrow, Deacon David Viol and Deacon Craig Borchard. Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades will be presiding over the Mass for the Ordination to the Priesthood on June 4, at 11 a.m. at St. Matthew Cathedral.

Bishop Rhoades will also preside over the Mass for the Ordination to the Diaconate on May 21, at 11 a.m. at Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Fort Wayne. This year, both events will be open to the public and all are invited to attend.
Groups ask Congress to pass conscience protection for health care workers

WASHINGTON (CNS) — For decades, Congress and U.S. presidents — both Republican and Democrat — have approved federal laws "protecting conscientious objection to abortion," but it is increasingly clear current laws "offer far less protection in practice than in theory," said a group of faith-based, health care and pro-life organizations.

A group of 26 organizations made the comments in a joint April 19 letter to members of the House of Representatives urging them to pass the Conscience Protection Act of 2016, or H.R. 4828.

"Even many 'pro-choice' Americans realize that the logic of their position requires them to respect a choice not to be involved in abortion," the group said.

"We represent millions of Americans and tens of thousands of health care professionals with a profound concern about abortion, and particularly about the conscience rights of health care professionals and facilities," it added.

The letter pointed to several loopholes in current law that it said would be addressed by the Conscience Protection Act, introduced March 22 by Reps. John Fleming, R-Louisiana, and Vicky Hartzler, R-Missouri. Fleming is a medical doctor.

One example of such a loophole is taking place in California, it said. In 2014, the state began demanding that all health plans under the jurisdiction of the state’s Department of Managed Health Care — "even those pur chased by churches and other religious organizations" — cover elective abortions for any reason, "including late-term abortions and those performed for reasons of 'sex selection'."

The state allows no exemption of any kind, the letter said, noting that such a policy "flagrantly violates" the Weldon Amendment, a federal law enacted in 2005 to protect the conscience rights of institutions and individuals.

The California Catholic Conference filed a complaint about the policy in September 2014 with the Office of Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. To date, that office has not acted on the complaint, the letter said.

H.R. 4828 "is very similar to the abortion nondiscrimina tion provision that for the last three years has been part of the House’s Labor/HHS appropriation bills," the letter said. "It takes the core policy of Weldon — protecting those who decline to perform, pay for, refer for, or provide coverage for abortion — and writes it into permanent law. It clarifies the protections of Weldon, and adds a private right of action to enforce this law and other long-standing conscience laws on abortion."

Among the signers of the letter are the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops; the Christian Medical Association and Catholic Medical Association; the National Council of Catholic Women; the March for Life Education and Defense Fund; the National Association of Evangelicals; the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission; the Knights of Columbus; National Right to Life; and several associations of physicians and nurses.

The group’s letter follows a March 6 letter to House members from the chairmen of two U.S. bishops’ committees urging support for H.R. 4828 and noting its "modest scope."

"While existing federal laws already protect conscientious objection to abortion in theory, this protection has not proved effective in practice," wrote New York Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan and Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori, who chair, respectively, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities and Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty.

Salute the Class of 2016!

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Tess Steffen (260) 399-1457
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TODAY’S CATHOLIC
May 1, 2016
When it comes to happiness, there’s no app for that

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Happiness is not an ‘app’ that you can download on your phones nor will the latest update help you become free and great in loving,” Pope Francis told thousands of teenagers.

“Just remember that if Jesus is my Lord, if you have love for one another,” he said.

“Love, he continued, does not come from ‘doing whatever you want,” which only makes people “self-centered and aloof,” but is a gift that comes from “being able to choose good.”

“Be skeptical about people who want to make you believe that you are only important if you act tough like the heroes in films or if you wear the latest fashions. Your happiness has no price; it cannot be bought,” the pope stressed.

The first day of the celebration ended late April 23 with music and testimonies at Rome’s Olympic Stadium for an estimated 70,000 youth. In a video message played at the rally, Pope Francis compared the absence of Jesus in one’s life to being somewhere without a cellphone signal so it is impossible to connect with each other.

“Keep in mind that if Jesus is not in your life, it is as though there was no signal,” he said.

“Let’s always place ourselves where we have the signal: the family, the parish, the school, because in this world we will always have something to say that is good and true.”

Dive into world’s problems with courage, pope says

VATICAN CITY — Dive into the world’s problems with courage and help people turn their lives of desolation into abundance and hope, Pope Francis said.

“You must take life as it comes. It’s like being the goalie in soccer — grab the ball whenever they kick it,” he told people gathered in a Rome park for an Earth Day event.

“We must not be afraid of life, afraid of conflict,” he said April 24, because it is only by confronting challenges head-on and together that they can be solved.

Making a surprise late afternoon visit to Rome’s Villa Borghese park, the pope spoke to more than 5,000 people attending a four-day event sponsored by the Focolare Movement and Earth Day Italy.

In conjunction with the celebration of Earth Day April 22, the Focolare Movement tried to create a “village” in the park in the center of Rome to promote ways for people to live together in friendship and solidarity with respect for the environment.

After listening to some of the speakers talk about their experiences helping others, Pope Francis said their work was a “miracle” in which they helped transform “deserts into forests.”

The arid, lifeless world of the desert can be found “in all of our hearts,” in cities, on the margins of society and even in exclusive, gated communities — “it’s terrible, the desert is there, too,” he said.

“But we must not be afraid to go into the desert in order to transform it into a forest,” bringing about abundant life, even if it is a bit “messy.”

“But that’s the way life is,” he said.

The only way to understand the world’s problems — and feel compassion — is to get close to those in need, the pope said.

“It’s a risk, but it is also an opportunity, for me and for the person I draw near to.”

Helping others must be “free” without expecting anything in return, he said. The Christian sense of “gratitude” is not to be forgotten “in this world where it seems if you don’t pay, you can’t live.”

Some people will look withdrawn or worried, he said. They are missing “a smile, tenderness” because they lack a kind of friendliness or fellowship among people in the community.

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TV Mass ministry brings comfort to the sick and homebound

The co-producers of the Fort Wayne area televised Mass, Beth Machall-Dwyer and Bob Nicola, finalize paperwork before a live broadcast of the TV Mass. Many volunteers in both South Bend and Fort Wayne assist to provide this ministry to the community every week. Those who are sick or homebound enjoy seeing local pastors and parishioners each week during the 30 minute broadcast.

Volunteer Cathy Bryie focuses her camera on the priest during the half hour TV Mass.

Year of Mercy day 145

“May every man and woman who comes to confession find a father who welcomes them and a Father who forgives them.” — Pope Francis

More photos showing works of mercy can be found at MyYearofMercy.org

Sodalitas program serves local community

Bishop Luers High School students in Fort Wayne offered a day of service to the community through the Sodalitas program on Thursday, April 14. Sodalitas is a program created for students, by students, with its main mission to serve, lead, grow and develop an appreciation for helping others. Sodalitas is a fellowship of students and adults who are helping fulfill a part of the Bishop Luers mission of serving each other and the community through the development, planning and implementation of service projects. Students and staff from Bishop Luers High School participated in service projects on April 14 at more than 22 different locations throughout the community. Bishop Luers students Alex Steffen and Joseph Klinger were with a group of 25 students who played bingo with residents at Saint Anne Communities in Fort Wayne.

“Living the Year of Mercy Visit the Sick

Watch the TV Mass
Fort Wayne area on WFFT-TV, Channel 55, at 10:30 a.m.
South Bend area on WNDU, Channel 16, at 10:30 a.m.
Online anytime at diocesefwsb.org/TV-Mass
For more information contact the Communications office at 260-744-0012.

Director Nick Stanley operates the control board in the studio at the University of Saint Francis during a live televised Mass.

Photo provided by Bishop Luers High School

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Year of Mercy

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American Heritage Girls host retreat

Sixty-five girls came together for a St. Vincent de Paul Parish American Heritage Girls retreat. The half-day retreat explored the role of a “Daughter of the King” through the Stations of the Cross, bible study, etiquette, songs, skits, snacks and service — making over 25 first Communion veils for the Fort Wayne parishes of St. Joseph, Most Precious Blood, St. Patrick and the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. Father Dan Scheidt spoke about what every princess wants: a castle. He used beautiful imagery regarding how the most exquisite material in the land was not found in a ball gown but on the chapel's altar in the heart of the castle. The retreat was open to other parishes and sponsored by the St. Vincent de Paul Parish American Heritage Girls troop. A third of the troop is Protestant and many attended the retreat and Mass that ended the day. For more information visit www.americanheritagegirls.org.

Veggie Tales designed for Construction

Bycraft earned the Eagle Scout Award while overcoming the challenges of an Asperger’s Syndrome diagnosis, an Autism Spectrum disorder.

To achieve Scouting’s highest honor Bycraft earned 50 merit badges — 29 more than required. Bycraft served in a variety of leadership positions in his troop and led a service project at Love Creek County Park in Berrien Center, Michigan, with a team of 26 scouts and adults. He built and installed eight bat nesting boxes which will help local bat populations recover from losses due to white nose syndrome.

Additional achievements include National Youth Leadership Training, the World Conservation Award, the Catholic Committee on Scouting Ad Altari Dei Award and membership in the Order of the Arrow, Scouting’s honor and service society.

GRANGER — Gregory Bycraft, 16, of Boy Scout Troop 572, Granger, was honored Saturday, April 16, at Knollwood Country Club.

BYCRAFT earned the Eagle Scout Award while overcoming the challenges of an Asperger’s Syndrome diagnosis, an Autism Spectrum disorder.

The groundbreaking marks the successful conclusion of a $25 million fundraising effort to renovate and expand Angela and the athletic fields into a state of the art complex.

University of Saint Francis to offer summer institute on beauty

FORT WAYNE — The University of Saint Francis will offer a summer institute for high school students entitled Beauty Will Save the World, June 12-17. The institute seeks to broaden and enrich the theological understanding of high school students not yet graduated through the various ways beauty reveals God in our world.

During the summer institute the students will learn about and explore different methods of prayer, including the Liturgy of the Hours, the Jesus Prayer, Lectio Divina and Sacred Meditation. There will be daily sessions with an iconographer and they will be exploring and volunteering in organizations that serve the poor and suffering. Students will learn about the beauty of the body and human sexuality as God intended. Religious men and women will talk about their various vocations.

The fee for attending is $360 per student and includes room and board, supplies, activities and transportation. Scholarships are available.

More information, registration and scholarship applications are available at www.philosophy.sfu.edu/summer-institute.

Faith and Canvas

FORT WAYNE — The Confraternity of Penitents will offer a Faith and Canvas class Friday, May 13, 6:30 to 9 p.m. at 1702 Lumbard and Canvas class Friday, May 13, 6:30 to 9 p.m. at 1702 Lumbard. All proceeds benefit the Angela Athletic and Wellness Complex.

The Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School entry was titled “The Veggie Tales of St. Elizabeth” and included Bob the Tomato, Larry the Cucumber, Laura Carrot, Archibald Asparagus and Mr. Lunt the Ground.

A group of seventh graders helped to design and build the canned foods formations, which teaches STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) concepts, according to teacher-advisor Jodi Jump. Other teacher-advisors included Deb Brough, Michelle Voigt and Kristin Spoltman. The St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School seventh graders taking part were Sarah Busch, Catherine Bougher, Lucy Bryan, Justin Szczynski, Jacob Schroeder, Talia Keiffer, Mackenzie Lee, Andrea Moloci, Olivia Powers and Christopher Svitek.

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Family tickets are $40 and all tickets are $5 more at the door. Admission includes a meal of Timmy’s barbecue sandwich and beverage. Door prizes awarded at intermission. Call the school at 260-357-5137 for tickets or information.

Respect Life dinner draws from all denominations

SOUTH BEND — The St. Joseph County Right to Life held the ninth annual Respect Life Prayer Dinner at the Kroc Center on Tuesday, April 12. The dinner drew a crowd of nearly 240 Catholics and Protestants from the pro-life community.

Attendees were led in prayer by religious leaders of all denominations, including Father Bill Meineinger of St. Pius X Parish. During the dinner, music was provided by Joe Higgiltonboth and Ann Fuchs of St. Bavo Parish and members of the Notre Dame Liturgical Choir.

Mike Spencer, Midwest Regional Director of the Life Training Institute, delivered a key-note address calling upon priests, pastors and congregations to address the evil of abortion and bring it out into the light within their church communities.

St. Joseph County Right to Life also acknowledged the value of young voices speaking out in support of life. Awards for the sixth annual Youth Essay Contest were presented to the following middle and high school students: Joseph Garcia, seventh grade, home school; Catherine Nolan, eighth grade; Corpus Christi: Thomas Garcia, ninth grade, home school; and Emma Barrett, ninth grade, Trinity School at Greenlawn; who was asked to read her essay at the dinner. Winning essays can be read at www.prolifemichiana.org.

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Sister Mary Bosco: Responding to God’s call

BY JENNIFER MILLER

While in second grade, preparing for her first Holy Communion, Sister Mary Bosco remembers first thinking of becoming a religious sister. “We were learning of how He gave His all for us. And I thought, how can I respond? By giving my all, I thought.” Three and a half years ago, she did just that asking to join the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration in Mishawaka.

Exuding joy, humility and both a wisdom of a deep active older prayer life and the youthful smile of a young spirit, Sister Mary Bosco is in the second year of her novitiate, scheduled to give her first temporary vows this August 2016, and final vows five and a half years from now. The Sisters have an eight-year program, which allows the young women to discern, live and grow into their final vocational choice. Sister Mary Bosco, originally from Ossian, Indiana, and St. Therese Little Flower parish, finds herself looking upon these days with wonder. One of her current favorite Bible passages speaks of this wonder, from the Old Testament with Moses in liberating God’s people from captivity.

“I will smite Egypt with all of my wonders.’ I feel like that is what God has done with my life; there are so many wonders! Jesus in the Eucharistic, in the Incarnation, through creation, in a blade of grass, how good he has been to my family, my spiritual life… The wonder of God smites my pride, smites all my vices, still smiting. We are working on it. Not like an angry God, ferocious but with His wonders and His love… I think Moses was surprised too. And there is a real wonder that in the grand salvation history, in the midst of the cool natural wonders, is that Jesus asks Moses, and asks us, to be with Him in that redemption too, comes with us so personally and asks us to be His partner.”

God has surprised Sister Mary Bosco too. She found God using all things to call her to Himself, even the book, “The Adventures of Sherlock Homes” by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. “I read about this person whose hope was in God…. and it was an annunciation moment for me. I asked myself, “What am I living for?” And I realized that God was offering me greater intimacy and love.”

Even in the convent, Sister Mary Bosco continues to be surprised by God. The beauty of community is even greater than she realized before. “The support of the sisters is wonderful. I had a small taste of community in my family growing up and now an even wider family to grow into.” She shares with the community her joy of the Lord, listening skills and enjoyment of acting and being carefree. The older sisters fondly remember how Sister Mary Bosco brought a penguin costume with her for one of their plays and wore it well, also waddling around during a high school retreat.

For men and women considering a religious life, Sister Mary Bosco reminds them that it is “O.K. to ask questions of the faith… Search for the truth.” She also emphasized the importance and need for silence in everyone’s day, to listen and converse with God. Sister Mary Bosco has also found friends in the saints that have helped her spiritual life, most recently St. John Bosco (thus her given, religious name) and St. John Henry Newman, for his humor, simplicity and brilliance.

She recommends that the Church and the faithful help those discerning vocations by continuing to pray for vocations and witness actively to the joy of Christ. Also, teachers who actually witness to what they taught, at her high school, Bishop Luers, had a particular influence. Her youth group and parish diocesan priests all were key players in knowing others similar to her. Also, she suggests that a parish could have a vocations committee, which would pray and actively sponsor events and guests. As for a particular prayer request, she loves her vocational choice and asks for prayers for the decision of the religious freedom case of the Little Sisters of the Poor, which affects her community as well.
FORT WAYNE — In this Jubilee Year of Mercy proclaimed by Pope Francis, the Ave Maria House exemplifies a corporal work of mercy, the directive to shelter the homeless. Dubbed the hospitality center, the Ave Maria House on Madison Avenue near St. Mary Mother of God Church in downtown Fort Wayne is a facility where those who are homeless and often in need of companionship may find shelter and comfort.

With the vision of St. Mary’s parishioner Dottie Carpenter and the encouragement of its pastor, the late Father Tom O’Connor, the property was purchased in 2007 by the church under the auspices of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. Though the house was dilapidated, its structure was sound, the windows were good and the basement was dry, Carpenter says. And with its proximity to the church and its popular soup kitchen, it seemed the ideal location for the ministry she envisioned.

After the project was approved by St. Mary’s Parish Council, Carpenter got to work by securing approval from the city planning commission, asking for volunteers, calling in favors and soliciting donations for the facility. The house was cleaned, necessary repairs were made and everything that was needed “appeared out of nowhere,” she says. The late Bishop John M. D’Arcy blessed the home and by June of 2008 Ave Maria House was “ready to go” and has been in operation ever since.

The hospitality center is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and is a beehive of activity with 20 to 40 people dropping in daily for conversation and companionship. Coffee and snacks are always available. Guests may use the phone, the laundry facilities and the shower and obtain personal hygiene products. Internet access allows on-line job searches and applications, and the home’s address may be used to receive mail. Clean, used clothing is often available for those who need it.

But mainly, Ave Maria House provides a home-like shelter where everyone feels safe, everyone is accepted, no one is judged and no questions are asked. They can “leave the street behind,” says Carpenter.

As the home’s director, she is there on a daily basis to oversee activities and handle any issues that may arise. “I have the reputation of being hard-nosed,” says the feisty, red-haired woman. “Don’t get Dottie mad,” is the mantra shared by the facility’s clients. But she treats everyone with respect and it is repaid to her in spades. “She has a good heart,” declared one client.

Ave Maria House draws assistance from groups like IPFW students, who are slated to give the house a general cleaning as part of their Big Event, a community service project. Scout groups bring baked goods and school groups collect needed items. Women’s groups and church groups of all denominations make donations. Some monies come in from the church’s annual soup kitchen fundraiser and funding is occasionally granted by the St. Mary’s Heritage Fund. In addition, the 150 Club has 95 members who pledge $10 per month to help defray expenses. “People are very generous,” says Carpenter.

There is no paid staff and Carpenter is a volunteer along with the 20-25 like-minded individuals who share her ministry. Additional help is always welcome and anyone who is interested may call her at 260-705-1690 with inquiries. She will interview prospective volunteers to be sure they share her vision. “I want to know their feelings about the situation,” she says. Many of her clients have made poor life decisions, had their share of bad breaks and are down on their luck. They’re homeless and destitute, “but they’re still our brothers and sisters,” she declares.

In the Jubilee Year of Mercy, the corporal works of mercy give us a guide for how we should treat others, and Dottie Carpenter fully understands and prayerfully carries out Christ’s message.

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Seniors among steadfast group of Vincentians

SOUTH BEND — The vocation of the members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society is to follow Christ through service to those in need. Members, called Vincentians, show their commitment through person-to-person contact with the poor, striving to seek out and find those in need and forgotten, the victims of exclusion or adversity. As such, the “Home Visit” is the cornerstone of the work of the Society in the Diocese.

When Vincentians make Home Visits, they bring food and personal items to meet the immediate needs of the person struggling with poverty, but also the hope that they are not alone in their struggles. Vincentians make home visits in groups of at least two and offer to pray with and for each and every person they visit.

In 2015, Vincentians from the 21 parish Vincentian Conferences in St. Joseph and Elkhart Counties made 5,491 unique home visits, visiting 18,512 people in their homes. Home Visits are made 7 days a week, 365 days a year. For more information regarding membership in the St. Vincent de Paul Society, please contact your local parish or www.svdpbs.org.

Accepting what God has chosen for us

I’ve explained to God that He might want to rethink this free-will business. Yes, my generation can handle it, but those young people may not be able to handle it.

“It seems to me,” I’ve told Him, “it’s just too much responsibility and freedom for them.” Apparently God disagrees.

I suppose every aging generation feels that way at some point. “Kids today!” And the older one gets, the broader the definition of the word “kids” becomes. When my mother was in her 90s, she still referred to my four siblings and me as “her kids.” At the time of our mom’s death, the “young one” was 57.

In those later years, Mom and I talked a little bit about God’s will. This was after my wife, Monica, had died and Mom had been a widow for 14 years. I would jokingly say, “God’s stupid will,” and she would smile a little smile and answer, “Well, I wouldn’t use that word.” She was joking right back, appearing to say she wouldn’t use it, but she didn’t completely disagree with my statement. We both knew God’s will was best for us. We both knew that sometimes we didn’t understand it or like it. But because we have free will, we could choose to accept it. We could choose to take the time and make the effort to figure out His will for us. We had both been through such a huge and horrible change in our lives.

Truth be told, a lifetime of free will means a lifetime of figuring out and choosing.

In the words of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, found in No. 1730: “God created man a rational being, conferring on him the dignity of a person who can initiate and control his own actions. God willed that man should be left in the hand of his own counsel, so that he might of his own accord seek his Creator and freely attain his full and blessed perfection by cleaving to him.”

It continues: “Man is rational and therefore like God; he is created with free will and is master over his acts. Freedom is the power, rooted in reason and will, to act or not to act, to do this or that, and so to perform deliberate actions on one’s own responsibility. By free will one shapes one’s own life. Human freedom is a force for growth and maturity in truth and goodness; it attains its perfection when directed toward God, our beatitude.”

That’s where parenting comes in. A mom’s role, or a dad’s, includes helping a child grow and mature in truth and goodness whether that “kid” is 6 or 60. From adolescence to being an old-timer, there are so many choices and opportunities to accept and come to grips with our free will. And, as is so often the case, good builds on good.

A parent can also help a son or daughter become better at listening to the promptings — the nudges, if you will — of the Holy Spirit and come to see that “your will be done” is always a good deal. In fact, it is the best deal. It is never “stupid,” even when it can seem or feel that way.

That’s so because God never lets us know His will for us and then abandons us. Where there’s His will, there’s always the way, the truth and the life.
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Feast days are guideposts

The SUNDAY GOSPEL

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

Sixth Sunday of Easter
John 14:23-29

The Acts of the Apostles again provides the first reading for a weekend in the Easter season. As Christianity grew, it not only expanded beyond its original base in the Holy Land, but it also drew Gentiles in faraway places. This increasingly multicultural nature of the broad Christian community presented problems. Such a problem is evident in this weekend’s reading. A Christian community had formed in Antioch. Most likely, its membership was composed of people from all backgrounds, as Antioch was a large, cosmopolitan city. Jews would have been among them. The roots of Christianity, theologically, geographically, and historically were in the Jewish culture and in the Holy Land. The dispute arose in Antioch, at the time one of the major cities of the Roman Empire. (It was located on the Mediterranean Sea north of the Holy Land.)

Many others were former pagans, with no connection to Judaism.

The dispute was about circumcision, the Jewish ritual followed by males to this day. Evidently, in Antioch some Christian leaders taught that converts from paganism submit themselves to this ritual. Neither Antioch’s Christian leaders, nor Antioch’s individual Christians, resolved the dispute. This is important. It is New Testament revelation. Disputes were not left to the personal thinking of the persons directly involved, namely the converts themselves, but they were submitted to the Apostles back in Jerusalem, for review and resolution.

Replying, the Apostles called the Antioch Christians “brothers.” They decided that Gentile converts need not agree to this Hebrew ritual. Very importantly, the Apostles said that this decision follows the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

The Book of Revelation furthered the second reading. As all the readings in Revelation, this passage is poetic and symbolic. The city, of course, is heaven, the “heavenly Jerusalem.” This heavenly city awaits all who love God. On each of its four sides are three gates. Three was a perfect number. So was twelve. These gates are open and available to anyone. Salvation is offered to all who truly accept God.

St. John’s Gospel gives this weekend its third reading. It is one of the most eloquent passages in the New Testament. Four points are important.

First, Jesus calls upon the disciples to love each other. Second, the mere construction of this passage illustrates the fact that following the Gospel will not be easy.

Third, following Christ will not be impossible. The Holy Spirit will assist and strengthen.

Finally, for those who truly love God, peace will be with them. It is not necessarily an absence of conflict or conflict. It is the peace of heart and soul that comes from knowing that right is served, and that God is present.

Reflection

Already the Church is directing us to Pentecost, but it is not dwelling on a mere anniversary. Feast days are not just anniversaries. Instead, they appear in the Church calendar always to open our eyes to the work of the Holy Spirit. We need God’s guidance. If the Scriptures of Eastertime have taught anything, it is that God guides and empowers us through the Church. If anything was revealed in the New Testament, it was that a visible Church exists, first served by the Apostles.

For this reason, the Church in every generation takes such pains to retain the example and mind of the Apostles.

READINGS

Sunday: Acts 15:1-2, 22-29 Ps 67:2-3, 5-6, 10, 11-12, 14-15 1 Cor 15:1-8 Ps 2-5 Jn 15:26-16:4a

Monday: Acts 16:11-15 Ps 149:1b-6a, 9b Jn 15:26-16:4a

Tuesday: 1 Cor 15:1-8 Ps 52:5-3 Jn 14:6-14

Wednesday: Acts 17:15, 22 — 18:1 Ps 142:4 Jn 16:12-15


Friday: Acts 18:19-18 Ps 47:2-7 Jn 16:20-23


Carolyn Woo

Receive our daily Catholic reflection, today!

Antioch is an excellent essay by Benjamin Durham lists the four elements that theologian Karl Barth sees as essential for human encounter. The first is face-to-face interaction by which we are both seen and seen, eye to eye as equals without class or power distinctions.

The second element requires us to talk and listen or to dialogue, another favorite suggestion of Pope Francis. Shared expressions involve self-disclosure and receptivity of the other.

The third element is that we are friends whose witness will assist and strengthen. The fourth is that we are people who might decline to play a role in the marriage. The couple, according to our local communities. Beneficiaries and staff know one another as people with names and faces, stories, pain and dreams. That need not be the case.

An ad on TV features an insurance company distinguishing itself as not only assigning a number to the policy holder but also knowing the story of the individual and holding her dream in trust. An unlikely source to illustrate a papal teaching, but the message is clear enough: encounter is personal.

Get personal, as in engaging and knowing one another, underlies Pope Francis’ urging for a culture of encounter. He speaks against the tendencies to intellectualize, judge, dismiss and demonize the poor, the unemployed, the undocumented migrants, etc. They are categories of social concern as is war, statistics, theories, precedents, antecedents and solutions that delineate costs and benefits.

Too often they are devoid of faces, stories, pain and dreams. That need not be the case.

Look for opportunities to foster a culture of encounter.

John Carney

between men, as does the Quran. Buddhist monks practice celibacy as a form of purification conducive to spiritual enlightenment.

Perhaps the scare quotes are meant to mean the meaning of the word “liberty” rather than “religion.” This is a more disturbing possibility. One who misunderstands religious people believe will probably be willing to accept correction from them, since they presumably know better. But one who would deny religious people the freedom to act according to their faith disagrees on a matter of principle, not of fact.

I hope we are reading too much significance into a couple of punctuation marks. But I fear that we are becoming a society where sexual license is more important than religious freedom.

The next step, which the Supreme Court foresaw last year, will be to insist that everyone confess adherence to the new “dom” in scare quotes. Like Chris Power’s films.

Disputes, the print and electronic media show an increasing tendency to co-opt the phrase “religious freedom” in scare quotes. Like Chris Power’s films.

Erica’s family does not believe in the Holy Spirit.

Reflection

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The Church today tells us that, by accepting Jesus and living in his name, we are family. This is one way we can be with us in the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Then, the Church gives us very practical advice. Being with God in the heavenly Jerusalem is the only true source of peace. Anything else is death.

We reach God’s heavenly Jerusalem every day by following Jesus. Our personal judgment in this effort can be risky.

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On ‘aging gracefully’

I t seems odd, even a bit repudial, when we encounter tales of elderly men running after women who are young enough to be their granddaughters. The wheelchair-bound billionaire oil tycoon J. Howard “Mr. Jones” Hillman was 89 years old when he married the 26 year old Anna Nicole Smith. He had met the Playboy model and reality TV star in a strip club. Anna insisted that she really did love the old man, and wasn’t it for the money.

With age should come wisdom. It’s appropriate and fitting for older men to leave behind their former ways, and no longer live and act like college frat boys. It’s right to expect growth in self-control as we mature, and to expect a more reflective and sober approach to life. Growing old invariably offers us the opportunity to redirect our focus, and as our body weakens, our mind and soul can be rich in the eyes of the world, we may have previously avoided, like death and that which awaits us beyond death.

Our later years can powerfully provoke us to come to terms with our destiny and with higher truths.

In a recent column, Father Ron Rolheiser, quoting James Hillman, speaks to the graces of aging and infirmity that aging and dying can bring our way.

“They have nature so structured things that as we age and mature and are finally more in control of our life, our bodies begin to fall apart, and we need a bevy of doctors and medicines to keep functioning? Is there something drawn in the DNA of the life process that mandates the breakdown of physical health in late life? Hillman says, yes. There’s an innate wisdom in the process of aging and dying: the best wines have to be aged in cracked old barrels. The breakdown of our bodies deepens, softens, and makes the soul.”

I once overheard a hospital nurse chatting with one of her patients and she caught a bit of guard when she nonchalantly declared, with a little twinkle in her eye, “...when we get to be over 80, who doesn’t have hemorrhoids?”

The comment, I thought, reflected a healthy, positive attitude toward aging and infirmity. Unavoidably, our bodies decline. Our strength wanes. We get hemorrhoids and warts and cancers and high blood pressure and macro hemorhoids. In the midst of it all, we can accept our lot with grace and gratitude. A serene acceptance of our struggles, and even of the specific death that awaits us, is surely a great virtue.

But aging gracefully is not something many of us tend to do well. We resist the idea. We may cling to the fantasy of eternal youth. Some in our society even push the notion that we shouldn’t have to put up with the challenges of infirmity, and instead ought to receive help from the medical system so we can beat a hasty retreat to the exit. By pushing for physician-assisted suicide, they encourage us to despise the good of our own lives and to reject the graces that arise from our struggles by choosing to ingest any of a number of doctor-prescribed poisons.

On the other hand, by embracing our particular path into death, and by offering up our trials, we acquire a poise of soul and human maturity that orients us towards our destiny, a destiny in the hereafter that so many people appear to be missing. By letting our infirmities existentially speak to us, and coming to realize how true it is that we have no permanent dwelling here, we begin to grapple with that mysterious truth that heaven and home are synonymous.

Aging gracefully also involves recognizing and accepting the shortening of the time ahead of us and the lengthening of the time behind us. Even as we achieve a maturity of independence in our lives, we begin to cycle back towards a renewed dependence on others, on caregivers, family and the community, and we may even come to the realization that our own mind will have to be surrendered in acceptance of dementia comes our way. All of this can instruct us, if we accept it with grace, in the wisdom of relinquishing our own willfulness once we have become a little child, and returning to a humble framework of interdependence in our shared destiny with others and with God.

Father Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. serves as the director of education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia.

Stewardship — decisions, big and small

W e live in one of the most affluent cultures throughout all of history. No other society has lived as well as we do with all of our modern comforts and conveniences. Even with all that we have, it still seems we still do not have enough. We are inundated, through advertisements, with messages that tell us of all the things that we are missing out on — whether we need them or not.

We are exposed to advertisements many times through our day, even without being aware of it; sometimes they influence us to purchase things that we do not really need. As a result of this treadmill of buy, work, spend, we know the cost of things, not necessarily the value.

We are more concerned about making a living than making a life — which directly reflects God’s purpose for our existence. In a lifetime, we throw away far more than we keep.

Many people are trying to keep up with the Joneses, without even knowing why they want to “keep up.” However, we can never really keep up with the Joneses. As soon as we think we have caught them, Mr. Jones gets a pay raise, or takes out another loan, and buys something else and once again, our collection of stuff is less than theirs.

A stewardship way of life is counter to that cultural way of life. A stewardship way of life is a set of values, a spirit that affects our entire life, not based on what we have, or do not have, rather, based on gratitude to God for what we have, and awareness that God expects something of us. A good steward knows that life is beyond living with this constant urge of desire whenever we see what we don’t have. We must be careful about what we desire. St. Paul writes, “For the love of money is a source of all kinds of evil. Some have been so eager to have it that they have wandered away from the faith and have broken their hearts with many sorrows.” (1 Tim. 6:9)

It is not that getting rich is necessarily wrong, in fact it is a beautiful thing to see God’s blessings upon a person who is a good and “good,” “bad.”

This is contradictory to God’s intent for us, expressed through Jesus’ teachings. Jesus said many times that He came to do God’s will, that He must be about the Father’s work. Should we also base our lives on pleasing the Father? Jesus said He is the Truth. Truth is not a philosophy that is simply mixed in with other philosophies and then we choose what we would like the truth to be, according to how it affects me. The truth is a person — second person of the Trinity. That person gave us clear direction on how we should live, through His examples and teachings.

Harry Verhiley is the diocesan Secretary for Stewardship and Development.
New film is entertainment for entire family

NEW YORK (CNS) — Forest, fauna and beast never looked as good as they do in “The Jungle Book” (Disney), a lavish retelling of the 1894 collection of stories by British author Rudyard Kipling.

What makes this “live-action” 3-D adaptation particularly compelling is that, apart from the “man-cub” Mowgli (Neel Sethi), everything on screen, from the breathtaking jungle landscapes to the meticulously detailed creatures that great and small, was created on a computer. A cheeky line at the end of the credits, “Filmed in Downtown Los Angeles,” attests to this surprising fact.

Hence, this “Jungle Book” has much in common with another in-house creation, Disney’s beloved 1967 animated take on the tale. In fact, director Jon Favreau (“Chef”) and screenwriter Justin Marks pay homage to that movie with moments of humor and by incorporating its toe-tapping tunes, “The Bare Necessities” and “I Wanna Be Like You.”

A few scary sequences aside (the jungle is a dangerous place, after all), this version makes all of the anthropomorphic animals great and small, was created on a computer. A cheeky line at the end of the credits, “Filmed in Downtown Los Angeles,” attests to this surprising fact.

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Kipling’s basic plot endures: Mowgli, orphaned as a baby, is discovered by a kindly panther, Bagheera (voice of Ben Kingsley). He brings this child to a pack of wolves which raises him as one of their own, instilling a strict moral code and respect for family and other critters. Fortunately for Mowgli — and the audience — all of the anthropomorphic animals speak perfect English.

But deep into the jungle, where he encounters a happy-go-lucky bear named Baloo (voice of Bill Murray). An unlikely friendship strikes up, which will serve Mowgli well in a showdown with Shere Khan and another would-be despot, King Louie (voice of Christopher Walken), boss of all primates.

“The Jungle Book” barrels to an action-packed conclusion that may frighten the youngest moviegoers. But ultimately it’s all good escapist fun.

All hope seems lost until wolves surrender Mowgli, now 10 years old, to him for killing. “How many lives is a man-cub worth?” he challenges.

Mowgli decides to leave home to protect his wolf family and, with Bagheera’s help, makes his way toward the distant “man village.” An accident separates the duo, and Mowgli is swept deep into the jungle, where he is threatened by Kaa (voice of Scarlett Johansson), a seductive python.

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WHAT’S HAPPENING carries announcements about upcoming events in the diocese. Send your announcement at least two weeks prior to the event. View more Catholic events and submit yours at www.diocesefwsb.org/bulletin. 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.

Holy Name Society fish fry
New Haven — The Holy Name Society of St. John the Baptist Parish will have a fish fry Friday, April 29, from 4-7 p.m. Adults $8, children 5-12 $4.50 and children under 5 free.

One-day retreat offered May 14
Fort Wayne — The Blessed Eucharist: Our Greatest Treasure — a one-day retreat offered by secular Franciscan Bob Deck at Our Lady of Good Hope Church, 7215 Saint Joe Rd., on Saturday, May 14, from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Lunch will be provided and there will be a free will offering. RSVP by May 12 to Lora McClamrock at 260-422-4061 or mcclamro@gmail.com.

Bike 101 Lakes event
Angola — St. Anthony Parish will participate in and co-sponsor the seventh-annual Bike 101 Lakes event at 9 a.m. on Saturday, May 14. The ride begins at Coldwell Banker Beth Wehrly Graber Building, 2555 N 200 W, between Crooked Lake and Lake James with five routes of various lengths including a family route. The fees are $35 for adults and $10 for students. Proceeds from the event support scholarships for area middle and high school students to attend summer camps in music, art, dance and photography as well as support a college scholarship for Steuben county high school graduates. For information visit www.bike101lakes.com.

Bishop Luers High School
“Run with the KNIGHTS!”
10K Run or 5K Run/Walk
Saturday, May 7, 2016
Runners and Walkers Welcome!!
Race begins at 9:00 A.M. • Meet at Pavilion #1, Foster Park
Pre-register by April 29th to be guaranteed a T-shirt.
Visit Runrace.net or Bishopluers.org to register
For more information, please call 260-456-1261, Ext. 3039

Silence of Mary plans yard sale
Fort Wayne — The Silence of Mary group will have a yard sale Friday and Saturday, May 8 and 9 at 2607 Sandpoint Rd., from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Silence of Mary serves Jesus in the chronically poor, who live within our family homes both in Harrisburg, PA and Fort Wayne. Visit www.thesilenceofmary.org for information.

Week of Prayer for Life
The week of May 1-7 is the week of the National Week of Prayer for Life. A new rosary will be given each day to the parish for the week. The parish will pray the rosary daily for the cause of women and children. Pray for the unborn and the health care workers and those who remove the unborn from the womb and for the healing of abortionists.

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Little Flower Theater to present musical
Fort Wayne — The St. Therese Little Flower Theater to present musical “Getting to know The Sound of Music” Saturday, May 14, at 7 p.m. and Sunday, May 15, at 2 p.m. at the University of Saint Francis north campus. Tickets are $10 for adults and $5 for students K-12. Contact the parish office at 260-747-9139 for information.

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THE PROMISE OF THE VATICAN LIBRARY

MCKENNA HALL
UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

DATE, TIME          PLENARY SPEAKERS
MAY 9, 9:00 A.M.    H.E. Msgr. Jean-Louis Bruguès, O.P.
                   Archivist and Librarian of the Holy Roman Church
MAY 9, 4:00 P.M.    Carmela Vircillo Franklin
                   Professor, Columbia University
MAY 10, 9:00 A.M.   Rev. Msgr. Cesare Pasini
                   Prefect, Vatican Library
MAY 10, 9:00 A.M.   Ambrogio Piazzoni
                   Vice Prefect, Vatican Library
MAY 10, 7:30 P.M.   James Hankins
                   Professor, Harvard University

A concert of sacred music, featuring materials displayed in the Vatican Library, will be held May 10 at 4:00 p.m. in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart.

An exhibition of twelve highlights from the Vatican Library’s holdings will be held at the Snite Museum of Art May 8-22.

VATICANLIBRARY.ND.EDU

For additional information, please contact Chuck Lamphier at Lamphier.1@nd.edu or 574-631-1728.

Jointly sponsored by the University of Notre Dame and the Vatican Library

Generously supported by the Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts, the Medieval Institute, the Nanovic Institute for European Studies, the Office of Research, Sacred Music at Notre Dame, and the Snite Museum of Art.